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T H E
W O R K S
O F

Mr J O H N G L A S.

Grave DIALOGUES betwixt three FREE-
THINKERS, viz. O, A, and X.

[First published in the year 1738.]

D I A L O G U E I.

O. **I**T is great pity to see the extravagancies into which enthusiasm leads some of our species, and the affronts daily done to the dignity of our nature by that means.

A. Enthusiasm is a compliment that differing sects are always ready to pay to their opposites, upon their appearing heroic in the opposition, while none can be found ready to accept of it. But what is the folly, or even wickedness, that men have not been guilty of, under the pretext of conscience? Every one is very ready to assume this to himself, but not so willing to allow it to another that differs from him; which makes me fear it is but a pretence on all hands.

X. But this should persuade you, that all are agreed there is such a thing as conscience, and that it is a good thing, which, even they who ridicule the pretence to it in others, would be thought themselves to have.

There is a dread of the Deity, and of eternal judgment,
VOL. III. A which,

which, however men may endeavour to divert, they cannot wholly extirpate out of their minds. This is supposed in all the tricks of politicians about religion. And it is not the easiest thing in the world to persuade the worst of men to practise what they firmly believe will expose them to the divine judgment, without any hope of impunity. But when we are so far imposed upon as to imagine actions that are most foolish, or even wicked, to be agreeable to the Deity, then we can be conscientiously foolish or wicked.

Θ. I shall not insist on the name *enthusiasm*, though I would think it well bestowed on any who should imagine that mankind can be without some religion or other. The most stupid of the race cannot look on this world, which they see with their eyes, without the idea of a great contrivance, which necessarily implies a contriver. And one needs no more but hear two of the basest of the croud scolding together, to convince him, that the very dregs of mankind are not destitute of all sense of the *turpe et honestum*.

A. Yes. And what is *turpe* in one country is *honestum* in another, or even in the same country at different times.

Θ. So it may be, as to some things, such as positive institutions, but not so with respect to all. And some things may be held lawful and allowable, and encouraged on some accounts, notwithstanding their turpitude; but they cannot appear comely and honest in the same view wherein their turpitude is seen. But, however mankind may differ as to particulars, it is enough to the point, that they all agree in the general sense of right and wrong, and that some characters must be approved, and some condemned every where. That mens consciences are miserably misguided in innumerable instances, I freely own; but still it is too manifest to be denied, that there is conscience in man.

A. You are so very abstract, and distinguish so nicely in defence of this great director and guide, that I would be content to hear you a little further, on the subject of its being liable to be so much misguided.

Θ. That needs no more abstractness or niceness of distinction, but this, that men either mistake their own partial reasonings for the faithful verdict of their consciences, or subject their consciences to other guides that mislead them. But, as you like not my abstractness, I would rather speak of a particular instance that I had in my eye when I was complaining of enthusiasm.

A. An

Dial: I. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 3

A. An instance of a misguided conscience! pray let us hear it.

Θ. You know the little sect that has appeared of late, which I would not think worth the noticing, but for the pity that is due to any of the human kind, when they run into such ways of superstition, as reflect on human nature, and create disturbance to themselves and all about them. This whimsical people stick at nothing, be it never so ridiculous or uneasy to themselves and others, in their way of religion; wherein they yet appear very conscientious.

A. They have been too much gratified by the notice that has been taken of them; for that is the very thing they want, as Erostratus when he burned Diana's temple. And the more contempt and opposition they meet with, they have the more honour among themselves: for, whether there be any such thing as conscience among men or not, it is always a great honour to be thought to act according to it; at least, by one's own club, if no more can be attained. But, seeing they do not aim at raising any commotions in the state, and have no power, though they had a mind, to alter the constitution and establishment of the church, I cannot but look on it as a great weakness in any to be disturbed or uneasy with a people who are, in all respects, so inconsiderable. For, though the resentment of a proud injured clergyman be, without doubt, at work in this case, yet it does not work here in the ways wherein it has given the greatest disturbances to the world; but in a way wherein it may be easily subdued by neglect.

Θ. What you say, has been, and may be again; but, as you cannot well deny that there is something odd in this matter, and out of the common ways wherein the resentment of ambitious clergymen works, I still insist, that a misguided conscience must be in the case: for if the honour of being thought conscientious were the spring of all their peculiar motions, they would not take every step that procures the disesteem and hatred of the greatest pretenders to conscience among whom they live; they would shun all appearance of agreement with any who are reckoned malignants against the godly party, or loose in their principles; they would be less severe upon one another's faults than they seem to be; and, in short, their conduct would be more regulated by esteem than I can perceive it is.

X. I even suspect they give yourself some disquiet. But may you not account for this *phænomenon*, by a frightful *idea*

they may have got of the state of mankind, with reference to the judgment of God, and of the course of the multitude, as displeasing to him, and inconsistent with the common pretence of love to him, and regard to his law, so that they cannot think themselves safe in the way of the multitude? Yea, and they may be persuaded, that the further they go from them, and the more they are condemned by them, they are the more approved of God.

Θ. It is possible; but if they be in the panic with the course of the multitude, so as to think they cannot fly too far from it, I should then expect to see them acting the reverse of the common actions of life.

X. It must be the rule by which they discover the corruption of the multitude, that directs their consciences in differing from them; and so they can go no further in opposition to the common course, or in receiving opposition from it, than that rule directs them, if they be acting conscientiously.

A. I never saw men pretend conscience and zeal for God uniformly; they always take care of some darling appetites to have them gratified, when their censures are most severe on others, and even when they are in some things most severe on themselves.

X. Let it be true, that we are more readily severe on others than on ourselves; yea, and that we may be induced to severity on ourselves in some things, to quiet our minds in the remaining possession and enjoyment of our darling lusts; yet this discovers some action of conscience, though misguided, and shews that the worst of us are not wholly free from it. After all your insinuations against it, I persuade myself it can give you some uneasiness upon occasions. And if you shall trace your arguings against it to their proper source, I doubt not but you will find them to be the fruits of an effort in your mind to shake off that same dread of a Deity, and of eternal judgment, which yet forces itself in upon you at times, in spite of all your arguments.

Θ. How miserable and how inhumane must that mind be, that cannot be easy without a persuasion, that there is no conscience, no truth nor goodness to be found in man! But I was wanting to be informed of the rule that directs the consciences of that people, and how they are led into all the ridiculous practices and ways of thinking, that render them unfit for the society of mankind.

A. Whether

Dial. I. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 5

A. Whether man be naturally sociable or not, I shall never believe that to be conscience that disturbs society.

X. Wicked society, if you mean, you are at a contradiction. But you forget what I have been saying, that it is the conviction they may have of the judgment of God against the courses of the society which they withstand, that makes them differ, and so they act conscientiously in the difference.

Θ. I look on myself as a middle person betwixt you two, who cannot be soon brought together; and I must, in the mean time, have a satisfying answer to my question.

X. Suppose then, they had only nature's light for their rule, and it were possible for them to attempt to walk up to it in all things; would not this be an attempt to differ from the bulk of mankind, yea, and even from those men who shew no small zeal for what they call the light of nature, as it were in opposition to the Christian revelation?

Tell me, do you not think that an endeavour after the strictest conformity to the law of nature, would make mankind uneasy? For, not to speak of envy, though men neglect their duty, and do wrong, they love not to have it told them that they are doing so? and a practical difference from us in being more conscientious than we, makes us uneasy; because it is the most effectual way of declaring us guilty before God in that wherein we imagined he would excuse us; much more will we be uneasy, when we see any, in the fear of God's displeasure, flying from that wherein we imagined he approved us; so that we are obliged, for our own ease, to persuade ourselves, that, however conscience be pretended in opposition to us, there is indeed no conscience in the case. And though the natural dread of a Deity makes some form of religion necessary, and there must be some restraint of vitious appetites in human society; yet the bulk of mankind never did, nor will, while this world stands, tamely suffer such thoughts of God and his judgment, to prevail and take place among them in practice, as leave no room for the fulfilment of their beloved lusts.

Θ. All this discourse goes on the supposition, that the law of nature is against nature, and a burden laid on the human constitution which it is not able to bear; and that the Deity is a malignant being, that delights in the uneasiness of his creatures, and cannot bear with their frailties: whereas, when we attempt to think of the Deity, we lose ourselves

ourselves in the thoughts of infinite goodness, wherewith it is impossible to reconcile such frightful notions of him and his laws as I perceive you are insinuating.

X. I suppose no other notion of the Deity but that of *infinite goodness*, and let his law be the rule of our conformity to his goodness; but then, the least disconformity to that law must have a malignity in it, to which the Deity is as opposite as he is good. And seeing there is an infinite opposition betwixt the Deity and the least deviation from his law, I can far less imagine a possibility of a reconciliation betwixt him and the least sin, than I can think of a reconciliation of the purest light with darkness. And so I may also say, that the least true endeavour after conformity to the law of God, must be so far an attack upon all sin, and make a difference in the world, unless you will set all the world upon the same endeavour, even a difference as between light and darkness.

Θ. Metaphysics in perfection! and against plain fact! Does not God pour out the riches of his goodness on sinners every day? — If, as you are insinuating, he cannot but appear infinitely opposite to sin, how should then his goodness lead sinners to repentance, which, at this rate, would make him irreconcilable to sinners?

X. Let it pass for metaphysics, till you be willing to understand it, and able to answer it; but, as there is no reasoning against fact, it is likewise most plain fact, that all the common instances of the divine goodness toward man in this life, are working together to put an end to that same life which they seem to uphold, or they most certainly issue in a terrible stroke upon his constitution, carrying in it a fearful presage of future punishment on his immortal part, for his abuse of the goodness of God.

It is no less plain fact, that we do not walk up, in all things, and at all times, to what we ourselves must own to be right reason, or to the law of nature; which must therefore be a burden that our constitution, as it stands, cannot bear; or, if it can bear it, what must we be in the eye of infinite goodness, who can conform ourselves to the law that is the rule of conformity to that goodness, and yet will not?

And when I think of the law of the infinitely good Being, I must, of necessity, have some apprehension of the infinite majesty and authority of that Being, which must be acknowledged by me in all my obedience to his law, so far as it is obedience: What then must be the consequence of my entertaining

Dial. I. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 7

retaining light thoughts of the least transgression of his law, in whom I live, and move, and have my being?

The infinite opposition of the divine goodness to sin, which certainly is in the world, cannot appear but by punishing sin infinitely. But I know you will not easily admit the notion of infinite mercy to sinners, and the infinite opposition of the divine goodness to all sin, both displayed at once in the salvation of sinners by the death of Jesus Christ.

Θ. Because it strikes against his goodness in pardoning the penitent, and against his justice in punishing every one for his own fault.

X. As you must own the law knows no repentance, so, I fear, your way of arguing will set aside a providence, together with the Christian scheme: for where do you see repentance mend the matter with them who are reduced to worldly misery by their own fault? And do you not see them daily relieved at the expense and loss of others? But, if every one be punished for his own fault, I see not how any one can escape punishment.

Θ. It cannot appear, from any thing we see, that good does not prevail in the whole system of things; for there are the strongest presumptions that it does. And whatever you have to object from the dark side of things, may be abundantly answered in a future state, where all will be set to rights.

X. While you admit not revelation, borrow nothing from it, I beg of you. And now, that you are come to your suppositions, I will enter my dissent against your supposing any thing but what is evidently founded in what you see; and so you must shew me, that, as far as you see into the system of things, good prevails in it, before you say any more of goodness, against the Christian scheme, which displays the divine goodness in an astonishing manner, and leads sinners effectually to repentance.

A. Allow me to say you are as far from your point as you were; but if you incline to spend your time on what now lies before you, I foresee the middle person must be engaged in difficulties that will oblige him to take to one of the sides.

Θ. I can be pressed with no such difficulties where I stand, as those I must be engaged in by taking myself to either of the sides.

A. When you have once rid yourself of the difficulties of that

that ancient question, *Si Deus est, unde malum?* you will be in no great pain with the difficulties of the Christian scheme.

Θ. But why should these grand subjects of dispute divert me from obtaining an answer to my plain question? I am sure those things, whereby the people of whom we were speaking expose themselves, and offend their neighbours, cannot plead a foundation in nature's light, and every body sees them to be a sect of Christians.

X. And if I should tell you that the Bible is the rule that directs their consciences in their difference from the rest of Christians, would you not make your own advantage of this against Christianity? For you seem no less ready to improve the ways of that sect against the rule they pretend to walk by, than the practice of any other set of Christians.

Θ. I must own, the manners of Christians, especially their leaders, say much to me against the truth of their profession.

X. Against their sincerity in their profession, perhaps you mean; but if you would have the conduct of the clergy and their followers, after the days of the apostles, to be a confutation of the truth of Christianity, I must own I so far differ from you, that it is to me a very strong argument for the truth of the scriptures.

Θ. That is surprising! Will you demonstrate the truth of Christianity from the lives of Christians, and the conduct of their leaders, since the days of the apostles! Pray let me hear how your argument proceeds?

X. You have nothing to say of the lives of Christians, or the management of their leaders, but what I find clearly enough foretold in the New Testament, by Jesus Christ and his apostles, who not only spake of the pernicious ways of the teachers that should come after them, but likewise foretold, that the way of truth should be evil spoken of by reason of them, and of the multitude following them. There is nothing more evident in the New Testament, than that there was to be a falling away from the primitive Christianity, and that under the Christian name; and that the beginnings of this were working in the very days of the apostles, which were to come to a head in due time. And this corruption of Christianity is so represented in the prophecies of the New Testament, and the conduct of the clergy is so set forth there, as I never saw it done so much to the life, by any who intended thereby to reflect on true Christianity.

And

Dial. I. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 9

And hereby, I think, the truth of the New Testament, which is the rule and standard of Christianity, is confirmed to me. And still the more, when I consider, that this book, which was in the power of them who corrupted the Christian religion, and in their keeping for many ages, who stuck at no villany, has come forth again to public view from among them, clearly testifying against all their wickedness, declaring the righteous judgment of God against their ways, and calling men every where to repentance.

Θ. I cannot deny that this deserves some consideration; but all Christians do not agree, that the scripture is the sole rule of Christianity. And even they who profess this, subject it to other rules in the interpretation of it. Yea, the scripture itself, and even the New Testament, is liable to a variety of glosses contradicting one another; so that it would cost the greatest labour, and most exquisite skill in the original language, and in antiquity, to fix the sense. And I do not know if it would be possible, either to fix the sense of the original as it now stands, or to come to any certainty, as to the purity of it, after all that has been said on this subject by the most learned critics.

X. The scriptures are so composed, that whatever doubt may arise about the purity of the text, or the sense of it, as to any point of the Christian faith or practice in one passage, satisfaction can arise, as to that same point, from a variety of other passages. The doubts moved, and questions agitated as to the purity of the original text, may pass for an evidence of the wickedness of the clergy seeking to establish their own authority and interest, by undermining the authority of the scriptures. But, after all the pains taken this way, all the different copies, and all the translations, concur to furnish abundant matter for the condemnation of the clergy and their followers. Any one of the translations contains the whole of the Christian faith and practice, so as it may be clearly enough seen in one place or other. And the whole corruption of the Christian religion that is to be seen in the Roman church, may be abundantly refuted by the very translation that is authorised by that church.

And as to the sense of the New Testament, I am of opinion, it would be a plain book to every one who should come to it as a *little child*, to learn the *words of eternal life*, and read it without the biases of self-interest, and the love of this present evil world, and without the wisdom of the scribe and of the disputer of this world. These are the things

that make the gospel, in its doctrine and precepts, unintelligible, or of doubtful interpretation to the most part of men. The clergy take care to flatter the pride of the philosophers, as far as is consistent with their own authority, in their glosses, and never fail to give such senses of the rules of the gospel as shall be one way or other consistent with the worldly interest and lusts of their followers; while all the power of interpretation that they are masters of is exerted, to extract their own authority, and worldly interest, out of the scripture, and make every thing inconsistent with the scripture that they can perceive to be against their interest. But, supposing self-denial, and setting aside worldly interest, the differences about the sense of the words of *eternal life* could not be so great, as are the differences about what is called *the light of nature*. We have had one difference about it pretty wide since our conversation began; and none of us are strangers to the differences about the principle of *moral virtue*. I was surprised with one of the disputants on that subject, telling me, "That I could not know what nature's light teaches without the help of revelation." —

Q. I see I must go without an answer to my question. I only wanted to know how far men might be led into the peculiar practices of that sect, by following the scriptures as their guide; and you should be judge, how far their ways might be improved against that rule.

X. Seeing I find you are in good earnest on this subject, I shall do my best to satisfy you the first time we meet.

D I A L O G U E II.

Q. I Hope you have not forgot your promise.

X. To shew you that I have not, I thus begin to perform it.

In the first place, That people pretend to believe the scriptures upon the appearance of the divine glory to them in the scripture-scheme. They take this on trust from no man, or set of men. If they were not persuaded on this evidence, they might be infidels; for they look on all them who profess to believe the scriptures, without having this evidence, as no better than infidels. They pretend to believe no whisper of any private spirit in this matter; because all spi-
rits

Dial. II. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 11

rits must be tried by the scriptures. They reject all church-authority in this case; because all the authority that any church can lawfully pretend to, must be founded in the scriptures. They look on the scriptures as a revelation supposing nature's light, and supporting it, by the divine authority applied to the consciences of men, in opposition to all false reasonings; and not only so, but chiefly, making a new discovery of God, suitable to the condition of sinners, and furnishing us with a new set of principles, with respect to the salvation of sinners, that were not discoverable by the light of nature, and manifesting more of the divine glory than is to be seen in all his works beside, which he is pleased to make men of the meanest capacities to perceive. They see no method of attaining to eternal life, consistent with the judgment of GOD against our sin, which nature's light shews us, but only that method proposed in the scriptures. In short, they find the evidence against Atheism, in "the things that are made," supported by the scriptures, against exceptions that are drawn from the appearance of sin, and its consequences in the world; so that they must either be Atheists or Christians.

A. Which is not an ill conclusion.

O. Well; it seems they believe upon the view they themselves have of the scripture-doctrine by illumination; and they look on it, not merely as a new edition of nature's light, corrected and amended from the corruptions of false reasoning, but especially as a new set of principles helping out sinners where the light of nature shews nothing, and shewing itself to come from God. After this, I suppose they will not trouble themselves to shew the agreeableness of every thing in this revelation to the reason of mankind: scripture-testimony will be enough to them; and they will be independent of the authority of any set of priests, as to the true sense of scripture; they must still see with their own eyes. And so far I must own they are in the right, though I do not understand the evidence upon which they believe. But how come they by their sense of the scriptures, whereby they differ from other Christians?

X. They who admit the truth of the scriptures because they conceive them agreeable to their reason, will admit nothing in the interpretation that is above their reason; and so that reason of theirs is the true standard and rule of what they call their faith. And those that receive the truth of the scriptures by tradition, or church-authority,

will receive no interpretation but what is agreeable to that tradition, and to the creeds and confessions of that church whose authority they depend on ; and so that tradition, and these forms of faith, are indeed the rule and standard of their faith, and not the scriptures, whatever they may pretend. But this people of whom we are speaking, have not so received the truth of the scriptures.

A. But others profess to receive the scriptures as a revelation above reason, and to believe them by the help of illumination as well as they ; and yet they walk by the rule of tradition, and human forms of faith, in the interpretation of the scripture, and contend earnestly for these forms.

X. And you may say too, That they pretend to follow the first separatists from the Roman church, who contended for the scripture as the interpreter of scripture ; but in all this they act most inconsistently, as we have been hinting. Those who at first separated from the church of Rome, published confessions, to clear themselves, and let all men know how they understood the scripture, taking it as its own interpreter ; and withal shewed themselves ready, as to any points wherein they misunderstood the scripture, to change their mind, whenever they should be corrected by the scripture ; and this appeared evidently in the different confessions published by the brethren of Bohemia. But, in process of time, the Protestant confessions came to be fixed forms and standards of sound doctrine, and are held to be fitter to direct men to the true sense of the scripture, and to distinguish truth from error, and to guard against heresy, than the bare Bible, which is appealed to by all heretics. And now Protestants, who refuse the name of infallibility, have their tradition, fathers, councils, and standards of faith, from which they hold it as unlawful to depart, as the Romanists do from theirs. In opposition to this palpable apostasy from the profession of the scripture as its own interpreter, occasioned by the drawing up and publishing of these first confessions against the Roman church, the people of whom we are speaking, profess to hold fast " the form of " sound words " that the first churches received from the apostles, which is only to be found in their writings.

Q. Seeing they hold the scripture as its own interpreter, let me understand how they go to work to understand the scripture by itself.

X. Supposing the evidence upon which they believe the scripture

scripture to be the key that opens the scripture to them, they look on the New Testament as the only certain and true explication of the Old, and on them both as mutually illustrating one another; because the "apostles said none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come;" and, in all their writings, are continually referring, one way or other, to some passage of the Old-testament scripture. And as they maintain, "That no prophecy of" that old "scripture is of any private interpretation," or capable to be applied according to the mind and will of any but the author himself, they refuse to admit any interpretation of the Old Testament that has no foundation in the New Testament, which they firmly hold to be the whole of God's own explication and application of it. Thus they enter into the spirit of the apostolic contention against the Jews; they reject all the senses of the prophecies and applications of the Old Testament that smell of Judaism; they contend earnestly for the mystic sense of the Old Testament concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, and, in opposition to all notions of that kingdom that are any way like the Jewish notion, they lay great stress on these words, "the kingdom of heaven," and on the Lord's dying testimony, the good confession that he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, which Paul recommends to Timothy in the most solemn manner, *viz.* "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.—— Thou sayest that I am a king: to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice."

©. They must be for the mystic sense of the prophecies, or renounce the most part of the New Testament, and see little of the Christian scheme in the Old. And it is very odd, that the Christian clergy have all along given so little heed to this dying testimony of Jesus Christ; but it seems, the account the New Testament gives of the Jews puts this sect in the panic, as to every thing that looks like them; and, I suppose, their imagination will be very warm upon their "kingdom of heaven."

X. That is to say, you would have them to be enthusiasts; yet, I dare say, they cannot be too much afraid of the spirit and temper of the Jews, as it is described in the New Testament;

Testament; "and every one that is of the truth, and hears "Christ's voice," will acknowledge, that the glory of his kingdom is too solid for an overheated fancy, and indeed surpasses all imagination.

Θ. I beg pardon for the provocation I have given to your zeal, and beseech you to go on, and inform me how far this principle of interpreting the Old Testament by the New, carries them in opposition to other zealous Christians.

X. It sets them in opposition to all the principles of national uniformity in religion, and of the extirpation of heretics and schismatics, which ordinarily plead a foundation in the Old Testament, and in the constitution of that earthly kingdom, because there is none for them in the New, which represents that earthly figure, as removed to give place to the truth of it, "the kingdom of heaven." They hold the whole business of extirpation as one of the clearest marks of Antichrist, who, in effect, denies, "That Jesus "Christ is come in the flesh;" and they call all them who preach, and study to practise persecution, "locusts," that "have the king over them, whose name is Abaddon and Apollyon," *i. e.* the *reverse* and *opposite* of Jesus, who "came not to destroy mens lives, but to save."

A. Who is for persecution that has not power, nor hopes to have it? Do we not see all sects, when at under, complaining of persecution? And would you promise upon them, that they would not persecute, and justify themselves in to doing, if they had but power, and met with provocation?

X. I would not, when I consider how soon Christians began to persecute after they were eased of the cross by Constantine, and when I think of the spirit of persecution that was working among them before, even while they were sufferers themselves, notwithstanding all that they read in the New Testament to the contrary.

But the grand distinguishing principle of this sect, as to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, and is not to be defended with the sword, is so inconsistent with *extirpation*, and with their laying hold on the means of it, that they must renounce their whole scheme, founded on this principle, the moment they think of grasping at worldly power, in any shape, to defend their religion, or to extirpate those who differ from them.

This principle of theirs, That Christianity cannot be a national religion, and that Christ's kingdom is not to be defended by secular power in the hands of his subjects, has
not

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not been maintained by any since the time of Constantine, at least in the way they maintain it. And as they find it very evident by Christ's dying testimony, and the whole scope of the New Testament, which is to them the only explication of the Old; so it, at once, shuts all the doors at which the principles of extirpation can enter into their profession; and still the more, that they hold and maintain the "inseparable connection betwixt the true profession of Christianity, and the cross in this life."

Θ. What do you say? Do they maintain, that there can be no right profession of Christianity in this world, without sufferings?

X. They judge, that the great scope of the whole Old-testament prophecy, is *the salvation that is in the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory*, which is reported in the gospel that was preached by the apostles, and that all who are appointed to share in that salvation are *predestinated to be conformed to Jesus Christ*, in his sufferings and the following glory, as "joint heirs with him, if so be that they suffer with him, that they may be also glorified together." And so they hold it as true as Christ's death and resurrection, that "if we be dead together, we shall also live together; if we suffer, we shall also reign together; if we deny, he also will deny us."

They take very much notice of these words that Jesus Christ spake to his disciples, after his sharp rebuke to Peter's zeal against his sufferings, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." And they build much on Paul's words to Timothy, when forewarning him of the *perilous times* that should come in the *last days*, and setting his own sufferings in opposition to those who "have a form of godliness, denying the power of it," he says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

They observe the warning Jesus Christ gives his disciples, that the keeping of his words will expose them to the same hatred wherewith he was hated in the world, especially their obedience to his new commandment. And they find by experience, that the least endeavour after the keeping of his words, and the open observation of his new commandment, by the ways and means enjoined in the New Testament, raises

raises the hatred of the world called *Christian*, against them, and puts them upon *bearing his reproach*.

They consider the blessedness connected with the suffering of reproach and persecution for righteousness sake, and the promise of salvation to the faithful confessors of the gospel; and, on the other hand, the danger of being ashamed of Jesus Christ, and of his words. And as reproach and affliction is connected with the keeping of his words, without distinction of greater and lesser, they are persuaded that the least of his words cannot be denied, or any way dissembled in their practice, through the fear of that affliction or reproach, without a manifest disregard to his name, and a contempt of his promises, and defiance of his threatenings. They have nothing to do with any persecution that is not for his sake, and for his words; but they cannot persuade themselves that they love Jesus Christ, if they do not count it the greatest honour they can attain to in this world, to suffer shame for his name.

Q. After this, I think we need not suspect them of self-interest in their interpretations of the scriptures.

A. Yet they speak of attaining to honour, and much self-interest lies there. As all sects profess the greatest veneration for their martyrs, so, suffering persecution for conscience sake, has a tendency to draw the esteem of mankind with so great strength, that I have often wondered at the dexterity of the priests, who have been capable to withdraw it, and even to restrain the pity of their people from them that suffer by the inquisition, yea, to turn it into joy, at their acts of faith.

X. They do indeed speak of honour, but not the honour of this world, which must be renounced by them who seek the honour that cometh from God only, in the way of suffering shame from the world for Christ's name's sake. They speak of the honour of being conformed to the Son of God, and having fellowship with him who humbled himself and became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross, enduring it, and despising the shame; and this, as connected with the honour of being conformed to him, in his high exaltation on the right hand of God. The gospel does not propose to extirpate the sense of honour, and the desire of glory, out of human nature, which was originally framed for glory and for dominion; for it points out humiliation, reproach, and disgrace, as the hardest thing in suffering; and it calls us to seek after the honour that comes from

from God only, and his kingdom that he will give in the world to come, and to comfort ourselves with the hope of this honour and this dominion, while we deny ourselves as to the glory and dominion of this world, and follow Christ, bearing our cross. This is the grand interest, the true honour, subservient to the glory of God, and consistent with humble subjection to him. And this is the interest and the honour that the first Christians had respect unto in their sufferings, denying themselves to every thing else: nor can it be well alledged that they had any thing else in view, till the time when something of the honour due to God began to be paid to martyrs, and annual days observed to their honour.

Θ. But this will make few sufferers for Christ, and as few Christians. The bulk of them that go under that name will never subscribe to this, till they find some method of explaining it away, or evading the force of it. Nor shall I easily believe that they themselves will come fully up to it; while at the same time I must own, it is pretty clear in the New Testament.

X. They are far from denying that there are few Christians; neither do they themselves pretend to have attained to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being made conformable to his death: but this they constantly maintain, that they cannot look on themselves as Christians, except in so far as they are following after it. And when any of their own company fall openly short of this, they fall immediately under their discipline, which is according to their doctrine.

Θ. I reckon by this, we need not be afraid of a great following to them among Christians.

X. They themselves do not expect it. Yea, they would suspect themselves of too much conformity to this world, or the multitude of mistaking them very far, if they should come after them. The multitude that sought to make Jesus a king, left him when they perceived the drift of his doctrine.

A. They are indeed few; but it is a great question, if any two of them could stand together under the thorough exercise of such a discipline. And can any thing be more ridiculous than a grave pretence to the exercise of a discipline that it is manifest human nature could never bear?

X. It is above nature to be a Christian, as the practice of Christianity depends on the belief of supernatural principles. And, though human nature be greatly corrupted, I suppose

you may see the necessity of a superior wicked influence to bear it out in the Spanish acts of faith. If this be not impossible, you cannot tell how far human nature may be determined to act to the contrary, by a superior good influence.

Hypocrites may lurk, for a while, under the severity of the Christian discipline, as they did from the beginning; but it would be very ridiculous to say, that, because there are many hypocrites, there is no body sincere. In other cases you would laugh at such an inference as this. Many are carried far in the pursuit of eternal life, who do not, at bottom, prefer it to the life that now is: therefore there are none pursuing it who are not determined to prefer it to this life.

Q. But you have not yet told me what are those principles above nature, or that nature's light could not discover, that they pretend to see in the scriptures, while they interpret it only by itself.

X. They take the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, predestination, the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness, the mystical union of Christ and his church, the resurrection and reign of the just, the general resurrection and judgment of the unjust, and the restitution of all things; I say, they take these doctrines just as they stand in the scriptures; though I know not if they will use all the words wherein I have, for brevity, expressed them; because they are not all scripture-words: but they hold these doctrines to the full of what you can think the New Testament declares, while it testifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as that wherein the truth of the whole is manifested.

Q. To be plain with you, so would I, if I could believe the scripture. But these very doctrines so plainly delivered there, as influencing all truly Christian practice, which is made to depend necessarily on the faith of them, are still shocking to me. And I heartily despise the method of recommending the scriptures to my belief, by smoothing these doctrines in such a manner, as to make the scriptures say other things than they really say. Yea, I doubt if these men be honest Christians, who would make us Christians at the rate of giving up to us, on the matter, the main distinguishing doctrines of Christianity. And I very much question, if they would have taken so much pains in the defence

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fence of Christianity, had not their interest lien in it one way or other.

X. Where is your charity! You cannot answer them, and that perhaps frets you.

Θ. Their own concessions go far to ruin their arguments: and the truth is, I do not see that I would differ so very much from what I now am, by becoming a Christian in their way of it, that the change should be worth the pains taken to make it. The Socinian and Arian Christians would only have me acknowledge a dignified and creature god, capable of divine worship. And the Arminian Christians would reach me some way to profess the merit and the grace of Jesus Christ; but leave me at last just where I am, as to human merit and the power of nature.

X. The people I am describing insist much on the corruption of human nature by Adam's sin; and they carry this far. Their account of mankind agrees pretty much with the author of the fable of the bees.

A. But, I suppose, they do not enter into his design, nor perceive the plain tendency.

Θ. I shall not doubt of the badness of the design; yet I reckon they agree with the author, as he appears to agree with the scripture. But what delight can men take in representing themselves, and their own species, in such a horrible shape?

X. Whatever designs men may have in representing human nature in that shape, the corruption of human nature is a sad truth, evident from the course of the world in all countries, and at all times; and every man may see it in himself, that has the courage to bring his actions under a strict examination. And the Christian's delight lies not there, but in the appearance of the divine glory in our recovery from that corruption, and in the beautiful image of God in Jesus Christ, to which scripture-revelation, and the power that attends it conforms us, which appears the more glorious in restoring us. The plain design of the scripture-account of mankind, is the same with the design of a shade in a fine picture. The plain tendency is to go to the bottom of our wound, in order to heal it; and they who will not bear the first, have no mind to the last.

Θ. I am not now to dispute these things: but I perceive by this, they will not be easily taken with the most specious pretences of the religious of any party. And they must, of course, be very uncharitable both to themselves and others.

X. So they are in your sense of charity ; but, at the same time, they make a deal of work about charity, in their own view of it.

Θ. And, pray, what is that?

X. Their charity is, " the love of the truth, as it is in Jesus ;" it is love to the *just God the Saviour*, as manifested in that truth, in opposition to all idols ; it is love to all the children of God, who are of the truth, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them.

This charity, in the practice of it, must be precisely regulated by the New Testament. And as they know nothing that brought them together, or that keeps them together, but that word of the truth of the gospel written in the New Testament, they profess to follow after the gospel-charity among themselves, and to study the observation of Christ's new commandment of brotherly love, in all the outward expressions and means of it, that are pointed out in the New Testament, from the highest to the lowest. And so they observe the feasts of charity, the washing of one another's feet, and the Christian salutation, or kiss of charity, which, however ridiculous it may be to many Christians, they find no less than five times expressly enjoined in the New Testament. As to offences arising among them, they profess the strict observation of this commandment of Jesus Christ, " If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a publican." And, as *charity never faileth* while any thing of Christianity remains in the world, they maintain, that we ought never to fail in the observation of any deed of brotherly love that the New Testament points out to us, either by express precept, or the practice of all the first Christians.

They insist on forbearance in brotherly love among them in whom the scripture-character of a Christian appears in any tolerable measure. When they are once agreed in this, viz. " To count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that they may win him, and be found in him, having his righteousness ; and that they may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and

" the

“ the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable
 “ unto his death, if by any means they may attain to that
 “ resurrection of the dead;” then they walk together in
 brotherly love, forbearing one another in many things
 wherein they may be differently minded, through different
 measures of the knowledge of the truth. And they hold
 themselves obliged to abstain from the use of indifferent
 things, for the offence of weak brethren. But to forbear
 any in a palpable transgression of the law of forbearance, and
 to indulge any one in the fulfilment of any of the lusts of
 this world, would be the very reverse of their brotherly love
 and charity, which *rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but re-*
joiceth in the truth.

As their charity delights in all them that *are of the truth,*
for the truth's sake; so it works in a way of good-will toward
 all men, because of the unknown elect among all sorts of
 men, without distinction, whom God *will have to be saved,*
and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. And thus their
 charity is the image of the divine good-will to men, mani-
 fested in the word of the truth of the gospel, and the imita-
 tion of his long-suffering toward his elect in all generations,
 and among all sorts of mankind; therefore they profess
 long-suffering and kindness, not only towards the brethren,
 but even towards the enemies of the gospel; and their cha-
 rity is *not provoked* * to revenge by bad usage, nor can it
 consist with *devising harm* † to any. But, on the contrary,
 it prompts to the obedience of that command of Jesus Christ,
 “ Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate
 “ you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and
 “ persecute you.”

They carry the matter of alms, and doing good to all men,
especially to the household of faith, as high as John Baptist
 did in his doctrine, and as Jesus Christ did, when the Pha-
 risees, who paid tithes of all, and gave alms upon honour,
 ridiculed him, and when his own disciples were astonished
 at his words. Instead of making rich, by laying up for our-
 selves treasures of corruptible things on the earth, they
 press making rich toward God, by laying up treasures in
 heaven, *i. e.* by almsgiving, and selling what we have to
 give alms. They charge them that are rich in this world,
 not to trust in uncertain riches, but, in opposition to that,
 to shew their trust in the living God, by doing good, beco-

* οὐ παροτρύνεται.

† οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν.

ming rich in good works, and by their readiness to distribute, and willingness to communicate; so laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. They put the poor in mind of the widow's mite, and set before them the example of the churches of Macedonia, whose joy, in a great trial of affliction and deep poverty, abounded to the riches of their liberality. In a word, they maintain, that both rich and poor are indispensably obliged, by the gospel-law of charity, not to do well to themselves only, but to deny themselves, in doing all good offices in their power to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.

And they are very positive in this, that true charity is distinguished by self-denial, after the example of Jesus Christ; and that it is utterly inconsistent with pride, which must be the principle that influences a man who has not charity, to give *all his goods to feed the poor*. True charity *envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, by exercising us in great matters, or in things too high for us, seeketh not her own*.

Θ. You have given me a long lecture on charity, and you have had my attention; yet I cannot profess myself a believer of this *self-denying gospel-charity*: for I own it is a little above my reach; only this much I perceive, that the notion you would give me of it, differs widely from my idea of *disinterested benevolence*.

X. I expected that their scripture-charity would find as little credit with you, as your natural disinterested benevolence has with them. Neither indeed can you believe it, far less feel any thing of it in yourself, without believing the gospel. And if you were blessed with this charity that *rejoiceth in the truth*, you would *bear all the things* said in the gospel, and count none of them hard sayings; yea, and take earnest heed to them, lest at any time you should let them slip; you would not be blinded with prejudice and disaffection, but gladly *believe all things* revealed in the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; you would *hope* for all things that are promised in the word of the truth of the gospel; and you would patiently *endure all* the afflictions of the gospel, reckoning yourself bound to lay down your life for the brethren, and to suffer all things for the elect's sakes.

Θ. Yes: And at the same time I would look on no man as a proper Christian, except such only as I could see following

ing after this charity, in the observation of the Christian institutions; and I would no more look for, or expect to find any truly good disposition among men, but what proceeds from revelation; and thus I would be a fit member for their church, whatever should become of me as to the society of mankind.

X. They do indeed expect nothing from fallen mankind, without the grace of the gospel, but sinning, and coming short of the glory of God. As to the societies of this world, they stand by every one's seeking his own things, and the good of the whole only in as far as he finds his own interest in it. And it is very true, *charity that seeketh not her own*, cannot be the spirit that animates such a body as a kingdom of this world: but, at the same time, it cannot make a man an unfit member of such a society; for *charity worketh no ill to our neighbour*, but disposes us with cheerfulness to *render to all their dues*. And thus, while you were governed by the reigning principle in the kingdom that is not of this world, you would be an exceeding peaceable harmless member of a worldly kingdom or commonwealth; you would neither oppress when in power, nor raise any sedition or tumult when at under.

Θ. Excuse me from meddling with your odd notion of society. But as to what you said first, I must observe some difference betwixt this doctrine of that people, and the rule of their religion: for Paul either contradicts himself, or does not carry this point so far as it seems they do. He acknowledges, that the Gentiles, which had not the law of Moses, *did by nature the things contained in the law*, while he affirms, that the doers of the law are justified before him with whom there is no respect of persons. And you know the instance of Cornelius, to whom Peter says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

X. I may do much to satisfy you as to this, after I have revised some notes that I remember I have on these texts. And as I have undergone a long examination at this time, I find I need some relaxation; so I will crave leave to break off here, and leave the rest to next meeting.

Θ. And you may bring your notes with you.

D I A L O G U E III.

X. I Have brought my notes, as you desired.

○. And I am ready to hear them.

X. I will begin with Cornelius, if you please.

○. As you will.

X. " Cornelius, though uncircumcised, was a worshipper
 " of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a profelyte
 " of the gate; for he was of good report among all the na-
 " tion of the Jews, as one that feared God; and therefore
 " he cannot well be supposed wholly ignorant of that pro-
 " mise to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all nations of the earth*
 " *be blessed.* Yea, Peter says expressly to him and his com-
 " pany, *Ye know the word which was published throughout*
 " *all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which*
 " *John preached.* So that Cornelius cannot be looked on as
 " a stranger to revelation, or as an unbeliever. His know-
 " ledge of the true God, as revealed to the Jews, influenced
 " him to fear him, in praying to him alway, and to work
 " righteousness, in giving much alms to the people.

" Peter perceiving, from what he had heard of this Cor-
 " nelius, and from his own vision, that God was now clean-
 " sing the uncircumcised, and taking them into his church,
 " as well as the circumcised, expresses himself in these re-
 " markable words: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no re-*
 " *specter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth*
 " *him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, ac-*
 " *ording to the word which he sent unto the children of*
 " *Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.*"
 " Our translators have cut off the latter part of the sentence
 " from the first, in the middle of a very common Greek
 " construction, and joined it to the following sentence, by
 " the supplement (*I say*), without the least foundation for
 " it in the Greek text, and thereby they have rendered the
 " whole passage very involved, and broke the connection
 " of Peter's discourse: for Jesus Christ, his being *Lord of*
 " *all*, manifestly respects God's accepting them of every na-
 " tion, without difference, that fear him, and work righ-
 " teousness. But the supplement (*according to*), as it has
 " a foundation in the Greek construction, makes the whole
 " passage easy, and leaves no shadow of a foundation for
 " any

“ any objection to be drawn from it, against the great scope
“ of the whole scripture.”

Θ. You are acting the critic, I see, and correcting the translation; but it is a loss you have not noted down the words of the Greek text.

X. Here is a Greek Testament; you may read them yourself, and be satisfied. —

Θ. “ Ἀλλ’ ἐν παντί ἔσται ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν, καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην, δεκτός αὐτῷ ἐστίν. Τὸν λόγον ὃν ἀπέστειλε τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ εὐαγγελίζομενος εἰρήνην διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτις ἐστὶ πάντων Κύριος. Ὑμεῖς οἰδατε τὸ γινόμενον ῥῆμα —” You render δεκτός τὸν λόγον, *accepted according to the word*, by supplying κατὰ. And indeed it cannot be denied there is such a Greek construction; yet it would seem the translators have been seeking a verb for the accusative τὸν λόγον, and could find none till they came down to οἰδατε. But ὑμεῖς οἰδατε τὸ γινόμενον ῥῆμα, looks no way like the resuming of τὸν λόγον; it seems plainly to be the beginning of a new sentence. The constructing of τὸν λόγον with οἰδατε has involved the discourse, and obliged them likewise to depart from the Greek, by saying, *the word which God sent*, instead of *the word which he sent*, as it is in the Greek, referring more to the foregoing words than the construction of the translators could well allow.

X. You shall be the critic and the translator; and I must own it is exceeding fair in you to give me so much help against yourself.

Θ. And you will not readily find fault when I speak for you; but I look not on the narrowness of the scripture-charity as any argument for the truth of the scripture against me. And to shew you that I am not unwilling to believe it to be as narrow as you would have it, I promise you as fair a hearing to your notes on the passage concerning the Gentiles *their doing by nature the things contained in the law*.

X. But you must not lay aside the Greek Testament. Turn over to the second chapter of the Romans, and look at the text while I read.

“ The phrase, τὰ τῷ νόμῳ, as it is here translated, *the things contained in the law*, is capable to be improved, against the main scope of the apostle’s whole discourse, and against the plain design of the text. But τὰ τῷ νόμῳ, may be more agreeably rendered, *the offices of the law*, or, *the things that pertain to the law to do*. And this is supported by the words immediately following, *These having not*

“ *the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts.*

“ The apostle’s plain design is to shew, that the judgment of God against sin must be executed impartially, and without any respect to the Jews, who had the written law, above the Gentiles, who had also sinned, though they had not the written law, and could not be judged by it. And whereas the Jews gloried in the giving of the law to their nation, he tells them plainly, that the hearing of the law could not justify them, but the doing of it; and if they did not the law, they had no reason to glory over the Gentiles, by their having or hearing the law: for the Gentiles, who had not the law written to them in tables of stone, with the finger of God, and to whom he spoke it not as he did to them, yet wanted not a law. To shew this, and likewise to manifest the justice of the judgment of God against the Gentiles, who should perish without the law of Moses, he says, *For when the nations which have not the law, do by nature the offices of the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience witnessing together, and reasonings betwixt one another accusing or else apologising.* Thus he shews from the testimony of the conscience of the Gentiles, and from their reasonings among themselves, mutually accusing and defending in the way of excuse or apology, that the Gentiles, who had not the law of Moses, did naturally to themselves what belonged to the law to do; so that they were a law to themselves. From this no more can be inferred, but that, having a law as well as the Jews, they justly perished without the Jewish law; and, if the Jews obeyed not their law, they had no reason to glory over the Gentiles, who had not the law promulgated to them as they had it. Thus this passage is perfectly agreeable to the apostle’s general scope, which is to manifest, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; and that every mouth must be stopped by God’s law, which, whether written on tables of stone, or in the hearts of all, makes all the world subject unto his judgment against sin.”

○. There is indeed a great difference betwixt obeying a law, and having a law made known to us, without which we could not be transgressors. For my part, I shall not doubt, that Christianity supposes the greatest corruption of human

human nature, and cannot take place but in consequence of a dispiriting sense of our own unworthiness, and want of merit, and a fearful apprehension of judgment and wrath; but the moral virtue of the philosophers arises from a generous sense of the dignity of our nature, and of its fitness for good and praise-worthy actions, and from agreeable sentiments of the divine goodness.

X. There can be nothing more disagreeable to the infinitely good Being, than to harden ourselves against that shame and fear that nature's light serves to breed in us, when we have not glorified him as God, nor been thankful. And our hearts are thus darkened and hardened by those vain reasonings, that serve to beget and foster in us that sense of our merit, and the dignity of our nature, or that shameless pride, as I call it, which is the strongest bulwark in our minds against the gospel of the grace of God, and the source of all those high thoughts and reasonings against Christ, which nothing but the power of his resurrection can subdue. And as for the agreeable sentiments of divine goodness, connected with this, I cannot express them better than in the words of a late poet, reflecting on the religion of some females, whose sentiments of the Deity he represents thus :

He's like themselves, or how could he be good?

Devoutly thus JEHOVAH they depose,

The pure, the just; and set up in his stead

A deity that's perfectly well bred.

Yet Christianity exalts human nature, and, in the issue, elevates us far beyond what any philosopher could imagine, and therein glorifies the divine goodness in such a manner, as could never enter into the heart of man to conceive. And here again we must begin where we broke off, on the subject of the goodness of God, and our obedience to the law of nature.

Θ. My comparison, I see, has warmed your blood from the coolness of criticism, roused your spirits, and made your words strong; and now you would dispute: but we have not yet broke off our main subject, and you must have patience with me till we pursue it a little further.

X. My blood and spirits, I dare say, owe no less to God our Saviour, than to a good friend: and however your pulse beat for the Deity, I could venture upon you, that

an indignity offered to your dearest friend would make your blood boil; yea, I perceive it is not perfectly cool, upon my strong words against the dignity of human nature.

But now resume our subject, and I agree to pursue it calmly.

Θ. I am satisfied your charity, and the charity of that sect toward mankind, abstract from the influence of revelation upon them, is very agreeable to the scriptures. But seeing they look for no true goodness among men, except what flows from revelation, tell me, how much do they expect to find by means of revelation?

X. As you must own, philosophy has not produced abundance of *truth*, or of *disinterested benevolence*, or of *pure and well-regulated self-love* in the practice of mankind, and that *the ideas of beauty and virtue* could not arise from the practice of the most part of men, but by the rule of contraries; so I plainly tell you, that sect expects not much from the generality of mankind any where, by means of revelation.

They speak much, in the scripture-style, concerning an elect remnant, and believe, that of the great numbers that hear the gospel-call, *few are chosen*. They reckon that saying of Jesus Christ will hold true in all ages to the end of the world, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And they hold them for false prophets, that would make the gate and way to life any way wider or broader than Christ has made it in his word.

They take great notice of that distinction betwixt the two seeds mentioned in the book of Genesis, immediately after the account of the fall of man, and observe the several instances of that distinction, from that of Cain and Abel still downward. And however great the number of the seed of the woman may appear at last, when they are all gathered out of every nation; yet in every age they are the fewest, in comparison with the seed of the serpent, who are the prevailing party, by whom the remnant of the woman's seed are afflicted and humbled in this world, in conformity to Christ their head, till Christ come again, and bring his people out of all tribulation, and destroy the serpent and his seed.

They observe how revelation, and religion depending on
it,

it, has been always corrupted by the wickedness of men professing to embrace it, and that in all its different periods from Adam downward. They speak of the corruption of religion as revealed to Adam, first by Cain, and then by the posterity of Seth, in mingling themselves with Cain's apostate race, till the flood, from which only Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and his little family, were saved.

Next, they take notice of the corruption of Noah's religion among his posterity, and even the race of them, (who seem to have been also associated with Ham's children, in building that famous tower for the worship of the heavens), until Abram was called alone from the service of other gods, and all the nations suffered to walk in their own ways from thenceforth, till Christ that seed of Abraham came.

They likewise point out the corruptions of the religion of Moses among the posterity of Jacob, till Christ came of them, when, though the Jews, the remnant of the tribes of Israel, were very numerous, a very small remnant of them was saved according to eternal election.

And all this is an introduction to that which they never fail to enlarge on as they are able, *viz.* The corruption of the Christian religion by the wickedness of its professors, who received not the love of the truth, especially their leaders, after the days of the apostles, which they see clearly foretold in the New Testament. They describe the corruption of Christianity from its beginnings, of which Paul speaks, when he says, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," and trace it down to this day, when they say the Lord is consuming that evil, which they do not expect to see wholly destroyed till he come again to judgment; and they remark this saying, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

They place much religion in abstaining from every part of that corruption, as far as they can find it out by the New Testament, where pure and entire Christianity is to be seen; and particularly, they fly from all appearance of subjection to "church-authority supported with secular power;" which they call antichrist, "the man of sin, the beast, and the whore sitting on the scarlet-coloured beast."

Q. What would you have me say, or what do you really think yourself of a revelation, designed for the benefit and help of mankind, that was shut up from most part of men
in

in a corner, and there covered with a vail for so many ages ; and that, when published to the world, proves beneficial in the issue to so very few ?

X. I suppose you reckon I should be against the use of the loadstone, and not take the Jesuits bark for the ague, because the use of these things remained so long hid from mankind ; and you would not have me make use of an excellent medicine, because the most part of men slight or abuse it : but, as I believe all these will be benefited by this revelation for whose benefit it declares itself originally designed, I suppose your question will press you a little more, when you apply it to your *reason of mankind*, and *principle of moral virtue*, placed in man, to lead him to happiness in the way of the practice of that virtue, which, however finely it may be talked of, must be owned to be a very great rarity among men.

A. And what should I then think of this, that there is no true religion but the Christian ; and if true Christianity be inquired for, it is to be found only pure and entire in books ?

Θ. They seem to go a great length that way : they do indeed make it very rare, but, at the same time, risk something on the reality of it.

A. And much more has been ventured on the contrary.

Θ. So much the greater fools were they that did so, when they had no hope beyond this life : for what good can a man propose to himself or others, by giving up his life on this point, that there is no rule of right and wrong, and no hope beyond death ?

X. Even the same thing those propose to themselves, who venture their lives and all their hopes to save their honour in duels.

A. And may not this be likewise suspected in those who pretend to suffer for conscience sake ?

X. It is true, a man may give his body to be burned, and want charity ; in which case it is only pride, in some shape or other, that moves him ; and sufferers ought narrowly to examine themselves on this head ; but there is no such room for others to question their sincerity, as in the case just now mentioned. We are even to think better of them who suffer on points of religion, as to which their consciences are misguided, than of others whose consciences are better informed, and yet shun suffering, as preferring their interests in this life to their eternal interest, and the friendship

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ship of this world to the friendship of God. But how can they be thought well of, that pretend to state their sufferings against the very being of religion?

A. At least this may be thought of them, that they are firmly persuaded there is none.

Θ. I may freely grant, that martyrdom should pass for a good proof of the persuasion of the sufferers; but, from what is said, it may be evident, that it cannot be admitted as any proof of the truth of that whereof they are firmly persuaded.

X. If you grant it a proof of the real persuasion of the sufferers, it will arise upon you, in some case or other, to a proof of the truth of that same thing they suffer for.

Θ. Cost what it will, I shall not retract my grant without a reason; but I will be glad to know in what case martyrdom comes to a proof of the truth of the cause.

X. In the case of a plain fact, whereof the martyrs cannot be ignorant. For instance, suppose a dozen of plain men, thorough martyrs on this point of fact, that they themselves, in presence of many others, did, with the greatest caution, and fear of being imposed on, evidently see with their eyes, an intimate acquaintance alive, handle him with their hands, eat and drink with him, and converse with him familiarly and frequently, for the space of forty days, and all this after he was notourly put to death by his enemies, who, having heard that he had said before his death, "After three days I will rise again," took care to see him thoroughly dead, and to have him secured in his grave, as far as human security can go; and further, that, after all, while he was conversing with them, and appointing them his witnesses of what they had seen and heard, promising them assistance from heaven, (which they afterward received, to the conviction of thousands), they saw him evidently taken up from among them into heaven: if the martyrdom of these men who suffered upon this, be a proof that they really believed it, or were most firmly persuaded of it, it must be, at the same time, a proof that the fact is true, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is true, and therefore that the whole of Christianity, imported in that fact, and wholly depending upon it, is true.

Θ. I confess this is what I did not expect, and I promise you I shall consider it. For you have told me already, that you will not admit "church authority supported with secular power," or any thing that pertains to that, as a proof against it,

it, because you say it was expressly foretold by these martyrs for the truth of the resurrection.

X. There can be no greater enemies to the gospel than the Jews were from the beginning; and yet, by a very extraordinary providence, they continue in the same enmity to this day, ready to be martyrs for the Old Testament, upon which the New is grafted; and the more opposite that *church-authority supported with secular power* can be shewed to be unto the testimony of the martyrs for the truth of the resurrection, it was still the more fit a mean for handing that testimony to us.

A. As this sect of which you are speaking pretends to depend wholly on the scripture, I think this is a very remarkable benefit they owe to *church-authority supported with secular power*, which they certainly ought to acknowledge.

X. So they do; even as they also acknowledge what they owe to the Jews, while they reckon that *church-authority* as opposite to the design of the New Testament, as Judaism is to the scope of the Old: but in this they especially acknowledge, with thankfulness and adoration, the marvellous divine providence, in bringing so great a good to them out of so much evil.

Θ. Nothing can be more disagreeable to the description given of Christianity in the New Testament, than *church-authority supported with secular power*. This was to be seen in perfection in the church of Rome; and the Protestant clergy have copied after that church in this matter to their power, and fully as far as the nature of their cause would allow. But do this people imagine, that a nation of this world will ever be governed without a public leading in religion, or without a national church of any kind?

X. They have no such imagination: for, from the rise of Nimrod's kingdom, which behoved to have its religion, as I hinted before, no kingdom of this world has wanted a public leading in religion.

When the Roman empire was stript of its old form of religion by Constantine, it put on in its stead that form of Christianity which ought to be called *antichristian*, i.e. a profession of the Christian religion fitted to a kingdom of this world, and made consistent with the pursuit of worldly honour, and wealth, and pleasure, and with all those practices without which no nation of this world can be powerful and flourishing; a Christianity consistent with all our worldly

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worldly interests, and whereby we are Christians in one country, just as men are Heathens or Mahometans in another.

This is national Christianity, or, as the apostle calls it, *A form of godliness denying the power of it*; the very opposite of that profession of the name of Christ, which was the effect of "God's visiting the nations, to take out of them a people for his name," agreeably to the words of the prophets about the nations.

This form of Christianity, separated from the cross, and stated in opposition to the ancient work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, was the religion of the Roman empire, after it cast off its old religion. And when that empire was broke into several independent kingdoms, these (by a very strange providence) remained united, as one empire still, in that form of Christianity, and in the body of the clergy, who were the greatest gainers by it, and therefore maintained it, and carried it to perfection, by the power of those kings who gave them their *strength and power to make uniformity*, till, at last, the Lord began to *consume this man of sin by the Spirit of his mouth*; and though his consumption be still going on, yet there is reason to believe he will not be utterly destroyed, but *by the brightness of the Lord's coming to judgment*.

So that, till the nations be demolished, the national form of Christianity will remain in some shape or other.

Θ. You are going, I see; but I have not done yet. I must sometime examine you a little further, and particularly on these names and titles, *The beast*, and *the whore*, and *antichrist*, and *the man of sin*, as importing the great evil against which they state their profession of Christianity; and I must hear you upon this consuming of the man of sin.

X. To-morrow, if you please; mean time farewell.

D I A L O G U E IV.

Θ. **N**OW you are come to be examined; and I suppose you are in readiness to answer my questions.

X. I have thought on the subject frequently, but cannot answer a question till I hear it.

Θ. In the first place, then, I ask what the sect of which we have been speaking means by *the beast*, or how they

apply this title to "church-authority supported with secular power?"

X. They think the beast stands in the prophecies, as an emblem of tyrannical power: and the clergy have exercised such a power in the world two ways.

1. They have ruled the world by the strength and authority of the ten kings who gave them their kingdom, *to make uniformity* *. And this is the beast with ten horns.

2. They have also a pretended spiritual, but really tyrannical power, which they exercise in the name of Christ, over the consciences of men. And this is the "beast with two horns as a lamb, but speaking as a dragon, who exerciseth all the power of the first beast, in his presence." This is the same with the false prophet.

This pretended spiritual and ecclesiastic power or jurisdiction, is exercised by an ecclesiastical frame of government, made after the model of the secular or civil government, by a regular subordination of church-courts, or church-officers, or both together; though it be disputed whether a general council, or the highest bishop be the supreme. And this is the *image of the beast that has ten horns*.

Θ. I should think this makes your people (for so I may call them) rigidly tenacious of the precise plan of the order and government of the church that they see in the New Testament, lest they should lose their Christian liberty, and pay homage to this *image of the beast*.

X. Perfectly right! True Christian liberty cannot be enjoyed, nor can Christianity be truly professed, or outwardly practised, but in that very order which is laid down for it in the New Testament: and though there be no licence to fulfil the lusts of the flesh in that order, and it be attended with several hardships and inconveniencies, yet they think they ought to rejoice in the liberty to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, which they find in that order; and they pity the worshippers of the *image of the beast*, who are but poor slaves and *servants of corruption*, in midst of all their enjoyments and worldly ease.

Θ. But I am afraid their zeal against the beast with ten horns, and his image, may lead them, in some cases, to be obnoxious to the magistrate, even in this land of religious liberty.

X. Your suspicion may be not ill grounded, as to places where magistrates either account it their honour, or find it

* *ποῖον μίαν γνώμην*, Rev. xvii. 17.

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some way their interest to serve the clergy; especially seeing no man can be admitted burghers or freeman in any corporation, without an oath to support the prevailing religion, and seeing all must make some shew of observing the holidays that the church pleases to appoint.

Θ. Doubtless it must be very refreshing to the clergy, under the contempt that now begins sensibly to afflict them, to consider the allegiance that is sworn to them in cities and corporations, and to see the whole nation bowing down to them on their appointed day.

But what becomes then of the Episcopal dissenters from the established church; I mean such as profess conscience in refusing to swear allegiance to the powers that be, and to pray for them? Do they swallow down this oath? Or, do they make any shew of observing the Presbyterian holidays, which possibly have been sometimes appointed by the clergy, even to shew their power?

X. If you consider the situation of these dissenters, with respect to the state, you will think their enemies would have a vast advantage against them, if they did not juggle a little in such things.

Θ. This is but a sorry excuse for perjury and hypocrisy in them who yet pretend to fear an oath.

X. And what will be your excuse for the pretence of a regard to Christianity and the scripture, in books written plainly against the Christian religion and the scriptures? What say you of the candour and ingenuity of the *Christian Deist*, as an interpreter of the scripture? Do you think he believes as he would have us believe, that Paul was such another as himself? And what is your vindication of the truth and sincerity of the silent submission to imposed public standards of faith, and decent conformity to the rules of the prevailing religion, recommended by a noble author?

Θ. I will make no excuse for it. It is not agreeable to truth, nor consistent with candour and ingenuity: and it cannot but be a strong prejudice in the minds of ingenuous men against the cause that is managed in such a manner: but the juggling way is still more inexcusable in them who profess the simplicity and godly sincerity of Christians. And if the prevailing clergy had as much value for the souls of men as they pretend, would they not be concerned to have the temptations removed? But what do I say! Are the souls of men able to counterbalance their own authority in their own balance?

X. More charity, I beg of you ! You seem to have a peculiar dislike of all sorts of the clergy : yet why should they be denied their share in your universal charity ? Are they only destitute of the principle of disinterested benevolence ? And doth that principle exert itself in all statesmen, lawyers, physicians, merchants, soldiers, and all sorts of mechanics ? Or, why may you not expect to find as much of it among the clergy, with respect to our souls, as among the lawyers and physicians, with respect to our estates and the health of our bodies ? Put yourself in their place, and you will not be highly offended that they refuse not the magistrates support to their authority. And the removal of the temptations to hypocrisy from dissenters, would work no change on their souls to the better. Their Christianity would appear more evidently in resisting them.

Q. Well, you are a fine advocate for clergymen ! But, if your people find themselves obliged in conscience, against the least mark or sign of subjection to the authority of the clergy supported by the secular powers, will they not be charged, in some cases, with the crime of disobedience to the magistrate ?

X. No doubt their enemies will raise a cry against disobedience to the magistrate, when his orders, in the execution of the commands of the clergy, are not obeyed ; and they who make no scruple of being accessory to theft and perjury in the case of Cæsar's tribute, will join heartily in the religious cry ; even as the Jews complained to Pilate of Jesus, and raised a cry against him, as opposite to Cæsar's kingdom : for though they spirit up mobs, and raise seditions themselves when at under, yet whoever contemns their authority when the magistrate supports it, must be, in their account, against Cæsar.

But the people I have been describing adhere to God's ordinance of magistracy, Gen. ix. 6. as it is illustrated, Rom. chap. xiii. where the evil, with respect to which the magistrate is a revenger, is only working ill to our neighbour, against the second table of the law. And those who are most forward in condemning them for refusing subjection to antichristian power, are as ready to treat them with cruel mockings, for a strict observation of the Christian law, touching the magistrate. But they are subject to the powers that be, because they are so commanded by Jesus Christ their Lord, who forbids them, under the highest pains, to receive any mark of subjection to antichristian power. And when

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when they refuse the *mark of the beast*, they shew subjection to the magistrate, and to Jesus Christ, in patient sufferings; for they abhor mobs as much as they do a national church.

Θ. I do not see how this can hurt civil society, though, while there is any national church, it must expose themselves to some hardships.

X. And without these no man can live godly in Christ Jesus, amidst this present evil world.

Θ. There is one thing concerning the beast not yet mentioned, that has tormented the commentators, viz. his *number*, the *number of his name*. Have you any thing to say of that?

X. The *number* of the beast must some way carry in it his character, for it is the *number of his name*. The scripture uses to set down numbers in words, and not in letters or figures, except the number of the beast, and the opposite number of the Lamb. The beast's number stands in these three Greek letters, *χ. ζ. ε.*, which happen to be initials of the words, *χρειανοί, ζένοι, ταυῦ*, i. e. *Christians strangers to the cross*; a very proper motto for the beast's whole company, and a character that, one way or other, fits them all, and none other but them. The opposite number of the Lamb (the emblem of Christ in his patient suffering, in opposition to the persecuting beast) stands in the 7th chapter of the Revelation, expressed in these three letters, *ε. μ. δ.* And these again are the initials of these three words, *ἡμαρτος, μαρτυρες, διακόμενοι*; i. e. *the persecuted witnesses of the word*; which is the very opposite of the former, and agrees exactly with the description the Revelation gives of the followers of the Lamb that was slain, in opposition to the worshippers of the beast. It has been observed, that the number of the Lamb's company, 144, is mentioned for the sake of 12, its square root, to give us a description of the true church, as wholly built on the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, even as the church of the Old Testament sprang from the twelve patriarchs. And this number twelve is set down in these two letters, *α. β.* which may stand for *ἱεράτευμα βασιλικόν*, the *royal priesthood*. And if the number 25 be the root of the beast's number, as Potter would have it, then that might be expressed by *κ. ε. κυριότης ἐθνῶν*, the *lordship of the nations*; of which the Lord speaks to his disciples in this manner, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be

“ be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Θ. I suppose the Greeks and Romans used to express their mottoes by the initial letters; and so I must own your account of the number of the beast's name is more plain and simple than any I have yet heard; and the opposite mottoes of the two companies are exactly agreeable to the doctrine of that sect about suffering, and to the New Testament. But I am not satisfied with their building so much upon emblems and dark sayings, especially when most part of them are incapable to judge of them, as being unskilled in the original language.

X. There is no doctrine drawn from these figures, or dark sayings, but what is all clearly and plainly taught in the New Testament, to the meanest capacities; which, by the way, are more capable to receive instruction by figures and emblems, than by metaphysics, or mathematical reasoning. But they do not build on any thing whereof they are incapable to judge. They observe a most terrible proclamation of wrath and vengeance against all them “ who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” And when they inquire how they shall be free from this most dangerous thing that is expressed in these dark words, they find the opposite of it immediately set before them in the next words, that are very plain, viz. “ Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Whereby they easily understand, that, if they have the patience of the saints, in opposition to persecuting, or yielding the truth for fear of suffering, and if they keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, as set forth in the scriptures, in opposition to all the commandments and doctrines of men, and that with patience in suffering, then they are free from worshipping the beast and his image, and are not receiving the mark of his name.

Θ. So much for *the beast*. Let me next hear what your people have to say of *the whore*.

X. As the true church is set forth by the emblem of a woman, so is the false represented by a woman, a whore; that is, a society that pretends to be the spouse of Jesus Christ, and the mother of the children of God, and, under this pretext,

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text, "commits fornication with the kings of the earth."

Q. And how does she that?

X. They hold this as a strong presumption of it, That, not content with the protection and provision that Jesus Christ bestows on his church, she betakes herself to the kings of the earth, and is defended and provided for by them, and shews herself openly abroad in the ornaments they have bestowed on her.

And they look on this as a plain proof of it, That she boasts herself the mother of multitudes of children that appear manifestly never to have been begotten by the power of Jesus Christ, or by the incorruptible seed of the word that was preached by his apostles, but by the power of the kings of the earth. In opposition to this, they hold none for church-members, but such as appear to be "begotten by" "the word of truth," and who are "keeping the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." And, as a true visible church must be a *church of the saints*, they cannot look on that as a true church, that is made up of members who never appeared to believe on Christ, through the word of his apostles, who appear not to have the testimony of Jesus, nor to be keeping the commandments of God. And they maintain, that the people of God are called to *come out of* such churches, and to *turn away from them*, lest they partake of their *sins* and their *plagues*.

Further, they say this is one of the plain characters of the whore, That she persecutes the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, and that by the power of the kings that commit fornication with her. And so she appears "drunk" "en with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the" "martyrs of Jesus."

Q. But where shall the Christian church be found, that will take with this last thing that they make the character of the whore? Churches may own these facts, That they are defended and provided for by the kings of the earth, and that, as they stand defended by these kings, they have many children, or members, that have not been begotten by the gospel, and cannot properly be called saints, and that had not been in the church without the favour and countenance of those secular powers, though they will stoutly deny the inference your people make from these facts (which yet wants not a fair appearance). But where is the church that will take with this fact, That she persecutes
them

them who have the testimony of Jesus, and keep God's commands; or that she takes pleasure in shedding the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus? Even the Roman church herself only shews her zeal for Christ, in prosecuting them who deny and blaspheme the testimony, and disobey God's commands, *viz.* heretics and schismatics; and so far is she from delighting in blood, that the very inquisitors beg the secular powers to shew mercy to those wretched heretics and blasphemers whom they delivered over to them.

Now, if this character do not apply to the church of Rome, she cannot, on any account, be esteemed that whore in the Revelation, that is drunk with the blood of Christian saints and martyrs, far less can any other church.

X. If we take the account the Jews will give us of the death of Christ, they were far from persecuting the Messiah, or putting him to death; but, in their great zeal for the honour of the Deity, they were taking care to have a deceiver, a false prophet, taken out of the way, according to the law of Moses, as a blasphemer, who, by his doctrine, made himself God, to the great reproach of the Deity. And so far were they from approving of persecution, that they highly honoured the prophets, and righteous men who suffered in the days of their fathers, and declared that they would have had no part with their fathers in that matter. Yet they themselves were acted by the same spirit that persecuted the prophets in their fathers; and on this very account Jesus Christ says to them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" And when Jesus Christ was cleared by his resurrection, testified to all nations, and the Jews had also persecuted the witnesses of his resurrection in their zeal of God, and of his law given by Moses, then the vengeance of God came upon their nation, for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel.

Neither will all the pretence that the false church makes of her zeal for the honour of Christ and his kingdom, vindicate her from the charge of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, even though she do greater honour to the martyrs of former ages than did the Jews, while she prosecutes her heretics and schismatics, her false prophets, or teachers, and blasphemers, upon the same principles, in the same method, and with the same spirit and temper wherewith the martyrs of former ages were persecuted. Even that poor pretext, of praying the secular arm to pity
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and spare them that are delivered over to it, serves to condemn her, as it shews she is not wholly ignorant that the church of Christ ought to be of another *manner of spirit* than to *destroy mens lives*; while at the same time she has the people of the nations and the kings of the earth persuaded, that they *do God good service* in destroying them: for she has made them *drunk with the wine of her fornication*. And when the time of the resurrection of the just, and the day of vengeance shall come, then *in her* will be found *the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth*. And all that partake with that pretended mother-church, (the true mother of harlots), in pursuing the principles of national uniformity and extirpation, partake with her in her sin, and must share in her plagues.

But certainly this character of the whore cannot apply to any church *that stoppeth her ears from hearing of blood*, of that concurs not, directly or indirectly, with the destroying or mens lives for Christ's sake, either by means of the magistrate, or by the hands of the mob.

Θ. The next question is about antichrist, which, I would think, must denote opposition to Christ.

X. But that opposition must be under a shew of regard to him; for John, who speaks of antichrist in his epistles, bids Christians try the spirits, lest they should be imposed on by the fair shews of false prophets, and take up with the spirit of antichrist, instead of the Spirit of Christ; and this exhortation had been perfectly needless, if the spirit of antichrist did no way pretend to be the true Spirit of Christ, but appear in open and undissembled opposition to it, as did the Jewish rabbies, and the Heathen philosophers. Paul tells us, the man of sin sits in the temple of God, and manages his opposition there; so that we may say, That "antichrist opposes himself to Christ in the name of "Christ."

Θ. At this rate, you would even comprehend our people under the designation of antichrist, as they make a sort of pretence to Christianity, and yield a decent observance to the rites of the Christian religion prevailing in their country.

X. So I might, if the pretext were not too thin to deceive any body that is serious about the gospel; but though they had all the grimace of the Quakers, who do not differ from them at bottom, they could not be called that antichrist. They rather seem to be pointed at in these words of Peter,

“ There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming ?” And I would take them to be those who speak evil of the way of truth, by reason of the antichristian false teachers, and of the multitudes following their pernicious ways.

Q. And how then does antichrist *oppose himself to Christ in the name of Christ* ?

X. John describes the opposition of the grand antichrist by that of his little forerunners among the first Christians. For, as Paul tells us, That the *mystery of iniquity*, which was at last to come to a great head, was *already working among Christians*; so John says, “ As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists;” and again, “ This is that spirit of antichrist whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.” He informs us, That these many antichrists that were in his time, departed from the communion of saints, as it stood among the first Christians, who, under the direction of the apostles, walked together in brotherly love, in separation from the world, or in opposition to the love of the world, and of the things of the world, knowing the truth as it is in Jesus, through his Spirit, whereof they were partakers, and professing the hope of the promise of eternal life; so that there must be a departure from these things in the case of that great antichrist, whereby his opposition to Christ may be manifest, notwithstanding all his pretences to an interest in him. Paul calls the same matter *an apostasy*, and says, “ Men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits.” Now, as the first perverters of the gospel departed from the faith, under a pretence to it, whereby they were fit to deceive and seduce Christians into a real opposition to the faith of Christ, so does that antichrist depart from the faith of Jesus Christ, *as come in the flesh*, in turning back to that old fleshly and worldly state of the church that he came in the flesh to do away, and that he abolished in his death; and thus he is a liar, when he pretends to own that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. He departs from the faith of Jesus *as the Christ*, or the anointed prophet, priest, and king of the church, which partakes with him in *that anointing*, and so *knows the truth*, and is a *royal priesthood*; for he sets up his own testimony, and puts it upon the church for the testimony of that great prophet, Jesus Christ. He establishes another priesthood in the church, and other
intercessors

Dial. IV. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 43

intercessors with God, and exalts human merit, to the making of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ of none effect ; and he imposes his own authority upon the church, for the authority of the Lord Jesus, and exercises a lordly dominion over God's heritage. Thus he sits in the temple of God, exalting himself, and opposing himself to Christ in the name of Christ ; and so he is a *liar*, when he pretends to own that Jesus is the Christ. Further, he departs from the faith and hope of the *promise of eternal life*, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and cleaves to *the things that are in the world*, in opposition to the Father and the Son, as manifested in that promise of eternal life ; he seduces men from the belief of this great truth, That *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him* ; he departs from the new commandment of brotherly love, and from that order wherein the children of God walked together in that love from the beginning, in separation from the world ; and in place of that *loves the world*, and is a *friend of the world*. And thus he is a liar, when he says he knows the Father and Jesus Christ, who was " declared to be the Son of God with power, " by the resurrection from the dead ;" for he denies the Father, " who hath begotten us to the lively hope of the " heavenly inheritance, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ " from the dead ;" and he denies the Son, " who gave " himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this " present evil world, according to the will of God and " our Father."

In a word, the spirit of antichrist, that would pass for the Spirit of Christ, is known to be against Christ by these signs. 1. It confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. 2. It speaketh of the world, and is hearkened to by worldly men. 3. It draws men away from hearing the apostles of Christ, who preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; and it seduces them to give more ear to the doctrines and commandments of men, than to the words of the Holy Ghost preached by the apostles, specially concerning the love of God, as manifested in Christ, and our love to one another according to that.

©. All this is still very agreeable to the doctrine of that sect, and it looks very like the New Testament ; but I should think it hard to prove against any Christian church, that they hear not the apostles of Christ. I know you will readily tell me what you have said before concerning the

interpretation of scripture ; but it will not be easy to convince them, who think they hold the true interpretation of the apostles against all errors and false glosses, or who hold their religion as received from the apostles, either by writing, or by unwritten tradition, that they are not hearing the apostles.

X. No less hard than it was to convince the Jews that they were not hearing Moses and the prophets ; yet the thing is very clear in many instances. I shall condescend on a few. The council of Constance confessed, that communion in both kinds was both commanded by Christ, and practised by the primitive church, and yet forbade it. After this the council of Basil made a decree touching communion in both kinds, by which they declared, that believers who communicated are not obliged, by divine right, to communicate in both kinds, and that it is the business of the church to determine in what manner the communion ought to be administered. Is not this a strange way of hearing the apostles ? as if these apostles had left the church possessed of a divine right to contradict the plainest things they have written ? And may not this same instance serve to fix the character of *changing the times and laws* ?

Θ. This is barefaced enough, I own ; but have you no more instances ?

X. It is as plain in the words of the apostles, that the disciples should assemble on the first day of the week to break bread, as it is that they should assemble for worship on that day ; yet churches called Christian, who hold themselves indispensably obliged to assemble for worship on the first day of the week, find no such obligation on them to assemble then to break bread.

Θ. That is say, they are not hearing the apostles, even in their assembling to worship on that day, but are obliged to it by some other authority.

X. I might observe to you further, that the church of Rome, and Protestant churches too, hold the eating of strangled and blood as *indifferent*, and as lawful as the eating of any of the meats forbidden in the law of Moses ; tho' the apostles (in the same decrees that freed the Gentiles from the yoke of that law) expressly forbade it, as *necessary* to be abstained from, together with the eating of things sacrificed to idols, (a thing that Christ hates), and with fornication ; and yet they have established a distinction of meats on their seasons and days of fasting, requiring " abstinence
" from

Dial. IV. betwixt three FREE-THINKERS. 45

“ from meats that God hath created to be received with
“ thanksgiving.”

The apostles gave commandment about church-officers, bishops, or elders, and deacons, and, in describing their character, expressly allow them to be *the husband of one wife*; but the church of Rome as expressly forbids them to marry at all.

Q. You cannot say this of Protestant churches, who allow them to marry as often as they please, providing they have but one at once.

X. But I have not sufficient ground to think they are hearing the apostles in that either; for, when I consider what is said of the ministering widow, that she is not to be “ taken
“ into the number, under threescore years old, having
“ been the wife of one man,” and that in opposition to the younger widows, who are allowed to marry again rather than do worse; yea, in opposition to such as have been oftener than once married, after they professed the faith, before threescore years of age; I think I have reason to believe, that the apostles forbade church-officers to be married oftener than once: not that they forbade them to marry in case of need, to prevent worse, but that they would have them refused as church-officers when so married.

Q. If I be not misinformed, these instances will not touch the Greek church; for it is said, they neither eat blood, nor allow their priests to marry twice, though they permit them to marry once.

X. Yet this is far from being enough to clear that church, or the several sects of eastern Christians, of the charge of not hearing the apostles; yea, every church is liable to this charge, that is not holding the gospel just as the first churches received it from the apostles, nor walking in that same order to which the apostolic exhortations (especially concerning brotherly love, and the communion of the saints and faithful in the worship of God) are all adapted; so that they cannot be observed, as given by the apostles, but in that order to which they are suited.

It would require a great excess of charity to esteem them as hearers of the apostles, who contend earnestly for a church-order, and for modes and forms of church-government and worship that are not to be seen in the apostles writings; and, at the same time that they are adhering obstinately to such usages, if they be put in mind of the neglect of some of the clearest plainest things that the apostles
have

have written, will readily answer, that these things were written only for that time, and not for the time we live in; which is in plain terms to say, that the words of the apostles are to be regarded just as an old almanack.

Some traces of the apostolic institution must be found in every church that is called Christian; and supposing these to be held by each church as its fundamentals, (for parties differ as much about this as any thing whatsoever), it is now become fashionable for men to excuse themselves, in their compliance with the deviations of the church where their interest lies, from the primitive order that appears in the apostolic writings, by this, "that hold they the fundamentals, and so are good catholic Christians;" and hereupon they are ready to glory over those who would be tenacious of the words of the apostles, without adding or diminishing, as narrow souls and bigots, opposite to catholic Christianity; yet the writings of the apostles are the catholic rule of Christianity; and if so, every deviation from that must be out of the catholic way. But if we are not to hear the apostles further than what we judge fundamental and catholic, how come we to hear any church or religious party in any thing but what is catholic? Why do we go along with them in the practice of those peculiar things, whereby they stand not only distinguished, but opposed to one another? To be one with all them of every sect who believe on Christ, thro' the word of his apostles, as far as they appear so to believe, is a glorious thing, and is the necessary effect of one's being a believer himself; and the most effectual way of evidencing this, is to hearken to every word of the apostles. But these men must be self-condemned, who defend themselves in their attachment to a church-order not agreeable to that of the apostles, or in their compliance with the uninstituted peculiarities of any church, by this poor pretence, that it is enough if they hear the apostles in things that are fundamental and catholic. If they see not that the apostles have laid down any rule for the order wherein Christians are to walk, in the profession of the faith, and love and hope that is in Christ, why do they observe any? or, if the apostles have given such a rule, but they are not yet satisfied what it is, why do they proceed till they be cleared? Or, how come they to comply with any addition to the words of God, or diminution from them?

The apostolic or inspired writers were "of God: he that knoweth God, heareth them; he that is not of God, heareth
"eth

“eth not them : hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and
“the spirit of error,” the Spirit of Christ, and the spirit
of antichrist.

Θ. You carry this point of hearing the apostles very far. We have dwelt so long on this, that I see we cannot now overtake the rest of our subject. As it is not agreeable to our friend, who has therefore shunned us for this time ; he will certainly be persuaded my head is turned, when he finds me still intent upon the unriddling of dark prophecies.

X. You must therefore study to make him easy, by beginning with something else that will be more agreeable to him ; mean time, I, who am exceeding fond to gratify your curiosity in this matter, shall consider the rest of the subject.

D I A L O G U E V.

Θ. I Have been thinking on what you said of *hearing the apostles* ; and I am afraid, you have drawn that cord straiter than did the apostles themselves, at least as to every case : For even Paul, the most noted writer among them, tells plainly, That he says some things from his own judgment, which he had not from his Master, and speaks but doubtingly of his having the Spirit in some cases.

X. The Lord told his apostles, when he was about to leave them, that he had yet many things to say to them, which they could not then bear ; but promised to send them the Spirit of truth to guide them, as it were step by step, into the whole truth.

The Corinthians had proposed questions to Paul touching marriage ; and, in answer to their questions, he tells them what the Lord had commanded on the subject in the days of his flesh, to which he adds some things for the clearing of their difficulties, which the Lord himself had not spoken while he was on the earth, and which he speaks *as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful* in the execution of the apostolic office that he had committed to him. And he is not doubting, but asserting that his judgment was the judgment of the Spirit of God, when he says concerning the virgin, “She is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.”
He

He would have the Corinthians to think, that what he was now saying further than the Lord had said on this subject while he was with his disciples, was the mind of the Spirit of God; which he had promised and given to his apostles, to reveal the whole of the truth that *began to be spoken by himself.*

But seeing there is a doctrine and laws made in the anti-christian nations, touching *wilful desertion*, founded on this same passage, they are certainly inexcusable, in not hearing the apostles as to every other thing they say.

Θ. Yet Paul forbids the Thessalonians to trouble themselves, by hearkening to what he had said in his first epistle, concerning the nearness of the day of judgment: for it is manifest he was mistaken in his judgment, which he had plainly enough declared, that the coming of the Lord would be in his lifetime.

X. This is that passage to which Peter especially refers, when warning Christians against *the scoffers* that should come in the last days, saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* For he signifies, that Paul, speaking on the subject of Christ's coming, in his epistles, says some things *hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, or untaught of God, and unconfirmed in the true knowledge of the scriptures, wrest, as also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.* Thus Peter sets Paul's epistles on the same footing to us with the rest of the scriptures that were given by inspiration, and foretels the use that was making, and would be made of what Paul had said, according to the wisdom given unto him, concerning the promise of the Lord's coming, and day of judgment, which he says would be wrested, even as the other scriptures, by the unlearned and unstable. And so, when I see this, or any other difficult passage of scripture wrested, or turned against the scope of the scripture, and improved against the authority of the scripture, and the truth of the promise of Christ's coming, I am so far from being shaken with this, that I am rather confirmed by it, as I find the scripture therein verified. As Peter holds it of equal authority with the rest of the scripture, though hard to be understood; so Paul himself does not retract any thing he had writ in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, concerning the coming of the Lord, nor signify any change of his mind, as to what he had said on that matter; but he guards the Thessalonians against the abuse of it, and corrects their mistake, by
telling

telling them what they had heard from his mouth while he was with them, concerning the man of sin, who behoved to be revealed in his time, and then consumed by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, before the Lord's coming, by the brightness of which he was to be destroyed.

A. You would have Peter to be in better terms with Paul than James is. For, after all that has been said to reconcile them on the grand article of justification, they still differ, just as a Legalist and an Antinomian: yea, these two authors have laid the foundation of an everlasting division among Christians. Luther, that bold fellow, once rejected the epistle of James, in his great zeal for Paul's side of the question, till plain necessity, in disputing with more rigid Antinomians than himself, obliged him to take it up again, reconciling it the best way he could to his beloved Paul's doctrine. On the other hand, James's followers, when they have done their utmost in torturing Paul's writings touching predestination and justification, into an agreement with James, fly to this, as their last refuge, that Peter says, "There are some things in" Paul's "epistles hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction." But you give this another turn. I dare say you are a Paulite.

X. And no less a Jacobite. For I reckon it the great fault of the Legalists and Antinomians both, that they do not give an equal ear to Paul and to James, and hear them both, as they stand in a beautiful agreement together.

A. And pray how would you reconcile them on the article of justification?

X. I think they need no reconciliation. For, if justice be done to their words, according to plain scripture-style, they were never at any such variance, as is among Christians, about justification.

To justify, in the scripture-style, is either to make one just who was before unjust, as to *justify the ungodly*; or to declare one just who is so already, and manifest him to be just, as when God is said to *be justified*.

Paul shews us, that we sinners are *made just* by faith, as it respects the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was delivered for the offences, and raised again for the justification of a multitude of all nations, without difference; and that we are thus *made just*, freely by the grace of God, that gave Christ to be the propitiation for the manifestation of the divine justice in imputing us to

the acceptance, and to eternal life, who were ungodly ; and this, without any respect to any work done by us, to make us just. And so he affirms, “ That a man is justified by “ faith, without the deeds” or works “ of the law ;” and says, “ To him that worketh not, but believeth on him “ that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Now, whereas some inferred from this doctrine, as the Antinomians do still, that we are declared just, and assured of our justification, by faith, respecting its object, without the good works that are the proper fruits of that faith, James shews us, that we are *declared just* by faith, as it produces good works, without which it can never *declare us just*, being alone.

Paul never said that our believing *declared us just*, without good works, which he always places as the necessary fruits and evidences of our being *made just* by the faith of Christ.

And James never said, that the good works which are the fruits of true faith, or that faith working in us to produce these works, *makes us sinners to be just* in the sight of God : For his words behoved to be tortured ere they could be applied to any thing else but the *declaration of our being just*. He plainly speaks of this, when he says, “ What profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath “ faith, and have not works ? can faith save him ? Faith, “ if it hath not works, is dead being alone. Yea, a man “ may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works : shew me “ thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith “ by my works.” And he can be understood to mean nothing else by *justification*, but the *declaration of our being righteous*, when he says, “ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon “ the altar ? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, “ and by works was faith made perfect ? And the scripture “ was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and “ it was imputed unto him for righteousness : and he was “ called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works “ a man is justified, and not by faith only.” We see, by the plain scripture-testimony, that Abraham was made just by faith, long before Isaac was born ; when it was said, “ He believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.” And we see, that, after he was just by faith, his faith wrought with his works, when he obeyed God, in
offering

offering his son Isaac upon the altar, whereby his faith appeared to be true and unfeigned; and when he had done that, his faith received a notable confirmation, by the oath of God, and he was solemnly *declared to be just*, by the works wherewith his faith had wrought; as it was said unto him, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, For because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee." Thus his title to blessedness was made most sure to him, and his right to it fully declared by the works wherewith his faith wrought; and thus the scripture was verified, and manifested to be true, which had said, before his faith wrought that work, Abraham "believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." And thus we see, from the instance of Abraham, "how that a man, who is made just by faith without works, is, by works, declared to be just, and not by faith only;" which is the sum of the doctrine of Paul and of James concerning justification.

Paul, the supposed author of the epistle to the Hebrews, (where he carries the point of acceptance with God, through the sacrifice of Christ alone, as high as he does any where), sets this same case of the confirmation of Abraham's faith, by the divine oath, before the Hebrews, as an argument to enforce his exhortation to them, to shew diligence in the work of faith, and labour of love shewed toward the Lord's name, in ministering to the saints, *to the full assurance of hope*, unto the end. And therefore, though there were men from the beginning that wrested the doctrine of Paul and of James, to make division among Christians, yet they are really as much at one in their writings, as they were in conversation when James gave Paul the right hand of fellowship, upon hearing that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, and when Paul was as forward as he on the pressing of good works. And thus it may be manifest to any impartial reader of Paul and James, that James was not a Legalist, nor Paul an Antinomian.

Q. Well done, by the help of a plain distinction, manifestly founded in the scripture-style! And this is not wrong Christian theory. But do your people pursue this to practice? Do they give an equal ear to Paul and to James?

X. I can say they do it, so far as to be reckoned Antinomians by the Legalists, and esteemed Legalists by the Antinomians.

Q. Then, I dare say, they are hearing the apostles: and

so let me part fair with this that has kept us so long, *The antichristian world bears not the apostles. The man of sin comes now to be considered, with his consumption.*

A. I thought you had got enough of these mysteries at your last meeting.

Θ. We only left this: and if you will have a little patience, you may see us soon at an end with it.

A. I confess I admire your patience. You have got into a temper I never saw you in before.

Θ. You knew me always curious and inquisitive, as well as simple and free. And there is something gratifying to curiosity, even in this subject.

A. What is your opinion then of the famous science of astrology? Or, did you ever study the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymér?

Θ. These things cannot be ridiculed, nor can the justness of the ridicule be perceived, without some notion of the nature of them. But I have thought more of the knowledge of future events, by that which is called the second sight, that seems to be a thing pretty well attested. Such knowledge of future events affords an obvious argument for a providence. And I do not know but the certain knowledge of such events may be communicated in the hieroglyphical way, if we be furnished with the key, as well as the knowledge of present or past things. Bear with me then a little, till I see if the scripture gives any key to the understanding of its hieroglyphics.

Mean time, I shall confess to you one thing, that I begin to be weary of the metaphysical or mathematical way of knowing moral subjects. And indeed I am not sure but I, who have all my ideas by sensation and reflection, may have juster, and much more practical notions of divine and moral subjects, conveyed to me in the emblematical way, than by all abstract reasoning.

A. You will allow me then to congratulate you upon your commencing mythologist, and to wish you success in the study of the prophetic figures.

Θ. You should rather compliment me upon my being happily delivered from a way wherein I have not found myself made wiser by the knowledge of any one thing, nor bettered, but tossed to and fro as an airy bubble, ready to burst with the pride of knowledge.

X. As there is an argument for the truth of Christianity that is drawn from the prophecies, I do not see how a man
can

can well pretend to answer it, without making any inquiry into these.

Q. Let me then, without more to do, inquire concerning the *man of sin*. Must he be a single man, as some would have it, or a succession of single men, like the Pope of Rome?

X. However great the Pope's part is in that *falling away*, which is perfected in the *man of sin*, as being at the head of that same church that has certainly led the van in that apostasy, yet, when we consider the *man of sin*, as opposed to the true church, that is often represented in the New Testament by the figure of a *man*, we must take it to signify a body of men, an apostate church, opposed to the true church by the epithet of *sin*.

Thus, the *mystery of iniquity* is opposed to the *mystery of godliness*. For, as in the true church, whereof Christ is the head, the mystery, or hidden sense of the figures and types of the Old Testament, is laid open; so is the false church, the mystery of many Old-testament figures, as the apostate ten tribes, Sodom and Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the like.

Q. But is the notion of a man, as representing the church, taken from the the Old Testament? Or, was the church of which Christ is head, pointed at by this figure, any where in the old prophecies?

X. The most notable hieroglyphic of the Old Testament, was the *cherubim*, which appeared to Adam after he was cast out of Paradise, was drawn on the curtains of the tabernacle, and on the walls of the temple round about, and set on each side of the propitiation, or mercy-seat, in the most holy place; and about the time of the destruction of the first temple, represented to Ezekiel in a vision, and preserved to us in the book of his prophecy, where this hieroglyphic is very particularly described. Now, the first thing that offers in the description of the *cherubim*, is this, *And this was their appearance, says the prophet, they had the likeness of a man. And this likeness of a man had the face of a man*, and some other hieroglyphical figures joined to it.

The New Testament refers to this, when it speaks of the church as a man, and the body of a man: for, though the *cherubim* have been taken for angels, the book of the Revelation, referring to Ezekiel's *cherubim*, and Isaiah's *seraphim*, expressly distinguishes them from the angels, and makes the *cherub* say these words to the Lamb, "Thou hast
"redeemed

“redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

Θ. Have you seen Hutchinson's books, particularly that which bears the title of *Glory and Gravity*?

X. Yes, and have been delighted with his explication of the faces of the ox, the lion, and the eagle, which he makes the hieroglyphics of fire, light, and air, or wind, which appeared also with the *cherubim*, as the emblems of the divine Three. The face of a man, joined to the face of a lion on the *cherub*, might be put for the man Christ Jesus, as head of his body the church. But it seems to me very improper to make the *cherub* itself, as it had the appearance of a man, to be the hieroglyphic of a man: nor does it answer to the key that I have said the book of the Revelation gives us for opening it, even in that same passage which confirms Mr Hutchinson's notion of the faces to me, by applying the figure of the lion to the Son of God.

Daniel also saw the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, with the wheels, in that vision which we have in the 7th chapter of his book, where he that sits on the throne is called the Ancient of days, and the hair of his head is said to be like the pure wool; which is applied, in the first chapter of the Revelation, unto Christ, who seems to be represented in Daniel, as he will appear at the judgment and destruction of the beast with ten horns, in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels. Before this Ancient of days, the likeness of the Son of man is brought by the ministering angels, and there is given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom. And in the explication of the vision, this likeness of the Son of man, whom they brought near before the Ancient of days, and to whom dominion was given, is expressly declared to be the people of the saints of the most high ones.

The church therefore, as it stands united with the divine Three, in Christ Jesus its head, is the thing pointed at in the *cherubim*, rather than the human nature of the Son of God: for the church, whereof he is head, being made one new man in himself, is one body, all animated by his Spirit, according to his prayer to the Father, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”

The whole church, with which the Son of God took part in flesh and blood to sanctify them, and deliver them from death, by destroying him that had the power of it, is the seed of the woman, opposed to the seed of the serpent, in the first

first revelation made to Adam: and after he heard of this, he had this seed of the woman very fitly represented to him in the *cherubim*, as contending; for *cherub* is from *ḥ*, like unto, and *ḥ*, to contend.

And thus far I have presumed to correct the ingenious Mr Hutchinson, leaving you to judge.

Θ. I now want to know if there be any such representation of the *man of sin* in the Old Testament.

X. There is a manifest reference in the book of the Revelation to the merchandise of Tyre, as it is described in Ezekiel: and now hear what Ezekiel says of the king of Tyre, "Thou sealest up the full sum of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone thy covering. — Thou art the anointed *cherub* that covereth; and I have set thee: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee. O covering *cherub*, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people, shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more."

Θ. As the king of Tyre was never placed at Eden, nor set a cherub in the mountain of God, nor perfect in his first rise, there must be something else pointed at through him, to which these things may be more fitly applied. And if the cherub be the church, this is certainly the figure of a corrupted church, that has fallen away from its original constitution, and primitive purity, and is corrupted by pride and traffic with the kings of the earth, like that of Tyre. And this leads me to think again of *church-authority supported with secular*

secular power. Ezekiel seems to speak of the *consuming* and *destroying* of this corrupted cherub, this *man of iniquity*.

X. Paul's words, when he says, *The Lord shall consume the man of sin, and destroy him*, are taken from the 7th chapter of Daniel, where it is said concerning the *beast* with ten horns, "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end."

And now hear how he is consumed.

His constitution was sound, till the Lord, in his wonderful providence, brought the scriptures again to light in the languages of the nations where church-authority was supported with secular power, and that in spite of all the endeavours of the Roman church to the contrary. The Lord's word is the *Spirit of his mouth*. From the time when this began to blow upon the man of sin, he began to languish; and the first degree of his consumption was, when some of the powers of Europe, minding their own interests, stood up in defence of the publication of the scriptures against the church of Rome, and when these kings, who had given their power and strength to the beast to make uniformity, began to break that uniformity. Thus the man of sin first felt pain, and his health began to fail.

⊙. For it seems his health lay in the concurring power and strength of those kings; and this could not but be a very great affliction to them that *had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image*. But what next?

X. In consequence of this, strife and discord took place throughout the Antichristian body, to the great disturbance of its communion. There came to be three stated communions in the Lord's supper, the old Popish, the Lutheran, and the Zuinglian or Calvinist; and these so stated, that all attempts to reconcile any one of them with another, or to live in communion with them all, have been, and probably will be to the end, to no purpose.

⊙. This was indeed a great schism in the body, a very stoppage of the circulation, a deadly blow to the Catholic communion; but still, in all these different communions, church-authority stands supported with secular power.

X. So it will be, in some degree, till the very end, tho', in due time, that part will be affected also before the end. Mean time, in the next place, particular nations and kingdoms were divided within themselves, as to their proper form of worship and church-government, as well as of doctrine. This has been the cause of civil wars and much bloodshed,

shed, as a just judgment from God, on the Antichristian nations, for their persecutions; and of this Britain has had its large share, where the spirit of contention, about what should be the prevailing form of national religion, remains to this day. In Scotland, there are no less than three great pretenders to it, beside the church as it is presently established, the Papists, the Episcopalians, and the Cameronians, or Covenanters, and these are also subdivided.

Θ. Here is a *fire brought forth from the midst of him to devour him*. And what has been the consequence of this? For one would think, this breaking of the clergy into so many factions, should weaken their authority and influence on the minds of men.

X. While the heat of this contention lasted, and the disputes were warm, church-policy and church-authority grew to such a height among the contending parties, as was not easy to bear. When dominion circulated from hand to hand, it became more intense, and exerted itself with the greater vehemence that it was opposed by those who were hoping to reign in their turn. The leaders of each religious party thought of nothing but power, and the people devoted to their proper leaders, paid a religious obedience to them, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against all that would not feign subjection to their authority? The authority of the clergy in general, was supposed as a thing unquestionable by any but Atheists: the question was only, in whose hands it should be lodged? This was remarkable in the last age; but it served, in the issue, to make men weary of church-authority, and let them see how little true religion there is in subjection to it; and the consequence of this is the heaviest stroke that has yet fallen on the kingdom of Antichrist.

Θ. And what is that?

X. The world seems now to be taking a more remarkable turn toward infidelity, than ever it did since the beginning of Antichrist's reign, and persecuting principles are wearing out of fashion; and, at the same time, the nature of Christ's kingdom, as it is not of this world, is brought to light by the scriptures, in opposition to the Jewish sense of the prophecies, and to church-authority supported with secular power. These things serve to sap the foundation of the dominion of the clergy; and for this reason they are very much afflicted with them, and every where raging, for that they cannot now exert the power that some time a-day they exercised in

the world. And upon this I would say, That God, in his righteous judgment, is *filling their kingdom with darkness, and they gnaw their tongues for pain, and repent not of their deeds*; and, in their zeal for a worldly kingdom to Christ, *i. e.* to themselves, they *reproach* the kingdom that is not of this world, the kingdom of *heaven*, and therefore the *God of that kingdom*. This is the more remarkable, that it has happened at the time which the scripture-prophecies point at, as fatal to the kingdom of the beast with the ten horns.

A. You have been amusing yourselves with spying figures in the clouds; and now, I suppose, you are to set about the work of fixing and settling the prophetic times.

O. Nor will that be an ill amusement when we have leisure for it; at least, our time may be as well spent on this, as on building castles in the air, with the philosophers, who raise fine structures on their unproved suppositions; and I dare say, we may come to a point about the times, before they settle a just notion of *gravity*, or fix the *longitude*. Mean time, I shall think on what has been said.

X. And I shall think on the times.

D I A L O G U E VI.

O. I Have been thinking on the affliction of the clergy, through the darkness that fills their kingdom by the increase of knowledge; and I am persuaded, they would be much more afflicted, if no body professed Christianity but they who believe the scripture testimony, and follow their teachers not a step further than they follow the scriptures. But you say, this is not to be looked for in this world; and as you signified, that the present distress is the more remarkable, that it has happened at the time which the prophets have set for evil to the kingdom of the beast, I am fond to understand how you make this appear.

X. The end of Daniel's *time, times, and an half*, must bring evil upon the kingdom of the beast, of whom it is said, "He shall wear out the saints of the most high ones, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times, and the dividing of time: but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end."

The

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The Revelation makes this time, times, and an half, (the time of the reign of the beast with ten horns), to be 42 months, that is, three years and an half. And again, it makes this 42 months to be 1260 days; that is, by reckoning 30 days in each month, and 360 days precisely in each year.

If these forty-two months be reckoned as Daniel's weeks are, each day for a year, after the manner of the prophets, then the time, times, and an half, or forty-two months, are 1260 years. This is the time of the beast's reign; and when this time is run, Providence must be at work to *take away his dominion, to consume it.*

A. But I suppose, there may be as great difficulties about fixing the beginning of these forty-two months, as about the seventy weeks.

X. Ignorance and inattention, or prejudice, may move difficulties and disputes on subjects that are capable of demonstration; and when men indulge their own fancy on such a subject as this, there must be different opinions about it: but the book of the Revelation has not left us at an uncertainty about the beginning of the reign of the beast with ten horns: for it represents the Roman state, with its capital city set on seven mountains, having seven different forms of supreme power and government, five of which were fallen when John wrote, (*viz.* kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes of the soldiers, and dictators), one was at the time of his writing, (*viz.* the Heathen emperors), the other was not yet come, (*i. e.* the Christian emperors), and when he comes, he must continue a short space, (*i. e.* in comparison with the foregoing sixth head; for he came not up till the fourth century, and fell at furthest in the year 476, when Augustulus was deposed by Odoacer), and the beast with ten horns succeeds, in whom the Roman empire, that was and now is not, being wounded to death in its seventh head, and dispersed into ten kingdoms, yet remains united as in an eighth head. Of this the book of the Revelation speaks expressly thus, "And I saw
" one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his
" deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered
" after the beast.---And power was given unto him to continue forty-two months." And again, "The ten horns
" which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received
" no kingdom as yet, but receive power, as kings, one
" hour with the beast." This most plainly fixes the
beginning

beginning of the reign of the beast with ten horns, who makes war forty-two months, at that same very time when ten kings received power in the broken empire. And this was so clear and evident long before the event happened, that Tertullian, who wrote about the end of the second century, or the very beginning of the third, tells us expressly, from the prophecies of the New Testament, "That the dispersion of the Roman state into ten kings should bring on Antichrist." Now, supposing there were any doubt if Daniel's fourth kingdom be the Roman, the Revelation points it out so exactly, and with such particular circumstances added to Daniel's description, that it is impossible to apply the description, in all its parts, to any thing else; and the figures hit with a marvellous exactness. And seeing the beginning of the reign of the beast with ten horns, whose time is forty-two months, is fixed by such a remarkable event, as the breaking of that empire into ten kingdoms, it is impossible that we can be very far mistaken in computing these forty-two months from that great event.

○. If that be the beginning of the time, times, and an half, it could not be after the deposing of Augustulus, nor very long before; and then you will say, we are now at the end of the time, times, and an half: for 1260, added to 476, make 1736. I could imagine, that the time mentioned by itself, or the first 360 years, makes a first period, from the beginning of this monstrous reign, till it came to its height and full power in the ninth century; and the times put together, or the next 720 years, make the next period, when he reigned in full power till the sixteenth century, when the reformation happened; and the dividing of time, or the 180 years, makes a third period from thence to this time. But did not the kingdom of the clergy begin to be in the present distress before the year 1736?

X. You must notice, That 1260 years, of 365 days, and one day more each fourth year, are full eighteen years longer than 1260 years of the prophetic sort, which have but 360 days precisely; and so the time, times, and an half, may have been at an end eighteen years before the year 1736; and thus it answers as well to the event.

And it is very remarkable, that the 2300 days, which are mentioned in that vision of Daniel, where the account of these days is *shut up*, because it is *for many days*, if they be numbered each day for a year, from the time when Daniel had

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had that vision, then the end of them falls about the end of the time, times, and an half, as they have been numbered from the time of the breaking of the empire.

Q. But must not the beast with ten horns be destroyed at the end of the time, times, and the dividing of time?

X. No: For Daniel places the end at which the beast is to be wholly destroyed, at some distance from the end of the time, times, and an half. He says, "From the time the daily shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, 1290 days." This is thirty days more than the time, times, and an half. And then it is said, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days. But go thou away till the end; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." This is that end at which the beast will be destroyed, and the kingdom be given to the saints; and it is forty-five days more than the 1290 days, *i. e.* seventy-five days added to the time, times, and an half.

Q. The Revelation meddles not with any of these numbers, except the time, times and an half; but you will say, That, by unfolding that, it lays open the whole.

X. And thus you may see that the Revelation, which is commonly esteemed full as dark as Daniel, or any prophecy of the Old Testament, may well be called a revelation, as it lays open the sealed visions of Daniel.

Q. But if Antichrist was come, and church-authority supported with secular power, long before the breaking of the empire, may we not suspect some mistake in the fixing of the beginning of the time, times, and an half, by that event? especially seeing the Revelation seems to place the end of the forty-two months, or 1260 days, long before the filling of the beast's kingdom with darknes.

X. You have hit upon the only considerable difficulty in this whole matter; but the book of the Revelation itself sufficiently clears it: for, in that vision, where the whole opposition of Satan to the church, by the power of the empire, from first to last, is represented, with a plain reference to the old prophecy concerning the *enmity betwixt the serpent and the woman*, we are directed to a twofold reckoning of this same number. There is a twofold flight of the woman into the wilderness, there mentioned, perhaps with a reference to Elijah's flying twice, and being fed in an extraordinary manner. The first flight is placed just after the seed of the woman is brought forth, and before
the

the fall of Heathenism in the empire, which is represented by the dragon's being *cast down from heaven unto the earth*; and there must be 1260 days numbered from the time of this first flight. This 1260 days is the same with the forty-two months of "the treading of the holy city under foot of the Gentiles," or the 1260 days of "the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, who have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy;" even as Elijah had power to shut heaven that "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months," at the time of his first flying. These 1260 days are finished under the sixth trumpet, and before the blowing of the seventh, and therefore long before the filling of the beast's kingdom with darkness, which comes not till the fifth vial under the seventh trumpet: so that these 1260 days must have been begun long before the beginning of the reign of Daniel's beast with the ten horns; and they must be reckoned from the time of the first flight of the woman into the wilderness.

The second flight of the woman into the wilderness, "where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent," is placed after the fall of Heathenism in the empire; and it answers to the time of the healing of the beast's *deadly wound*, from which there was *power given to him to continue forty-two months*. This last is the time, and times, and an half of the beast's reign, spoken of by Daniel, who mentions not the first, no more than he does the seven heads of the beast; but the Revelation adds the first reckoning of this self-same number, even as it adds the seven heads to Daniel's description of the beast with ten horns, to open the vision, and make the application of it to the events more plain.

Q. And when should that first reckoning begin?

X. Toward the end of the second century, when tradition came to be established as the rule of faith together with the scriptures; when the authority of synods and councils was brought in upon the churches, and began first to be exerted in the controversy about Easter, and when the philosophy of the Gentiles was admitted to illustrate the Christian doctrine; by means of which the Son of God, the *λογος*, came to be talked of in the Platonic manner, and the power of nature, and human merit was magnified. About this time the Gentiles, coming into the Christian profession, without being sufficiently purged from the
superstitions

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superstitions of their education, brought in with them their native superstition, under the Christian name; and from this time the professors of Christianity began to be looked on as a rising party or faction that meant to make a figure in this world. By these means Christianity was corrupted, and the professors of it grew to a considerable party in the empire, till the beginning of the fourth century, well prepared to receive the support of the secular power from the hand of Constantine, especially when the most faithful were taken away from among them, by the severe and long persecution of Dioclesian. It was toward the end of the second century that Christians began to *leave their first love*, and the Christian leaders to corrupt Christianity by merchandise, making a gain of it; dispensing it by the measure of philosophy and tradition, and the authority of synods and councils; and then was the first flight of the woman into the wilderness; then the witnesses began to prophesy in sackcloth, and the outer court of God's house was given unto the Gentiles, who did from thence tread the holy city under foot forty-two months: so that the outer court, or outward profession of Christianity, could no more be any where measured by the word of God, the only rule for measuring his house; till the end of these months.

Q. But does the Revelation point to this beginning of that forty-two months, any otherwise than by placing it after the erection of the Christian church, and before the fall of Heathenism in the empire?

X. It places the end of this forty-two months, or 1260 days, about the end of the events that belong to the sixth trumpet, and, as I said, before the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and therefore before the pouring out of the vials: For we must hold the seven vials under the seventh trumpet, even as the seventh trumpets are under the seventh seal, if we would not break the thread that serves to lead us through the book of the Revelation. Now, it points to a great event at the end of the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, whereby we may be directed to the beginning of it: for, when they are killed by the beast, at the end of their testimony in sackcloth, and are alive again after three days and an half, it is said, "They ascend-
" ed up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them;
" and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and
" the tenth part of the city fell." If this fall of the tenth part of the city be the fall of the Greek church and kingdom,

dom, which, from the time of the breaking of the empire, was no more the city, but a tenth part of it, and which fell by the hand of the Turks, the great event of the sixth trumpet, in the year 1453 : Then, if we count 1260 years backward from thence, the beginning of them will be near the end of the second century.

Q. As this fall of the tenth part of the city is said to be at the time of the exaltation of the witnesses, after their resurrection, what event happened, not long before that, like the killing of the witnesses ?

X. If these two witnesses be the Old Testament and the New, there was a famous contention with the church about their testimony, carried on by war and much bloodshed in Bohemia, from the time of the council of Constance, till it issued in the reconciliation of the contending parties, upon the extermination of the Taborites, who obstinately maintained the testimony of the witnesses against the church, and in that notable decree of the council of Basil, about communion in both kinds, whereby these witnesses were plainly sacrificed to the authority of the church, subdued under it, and their testimony rendered utterly of none effect to the people of the nations. This was in the year 1437.

Q. And what shall be the event for their resurrection and exaltation ?

X. The revival of the ancient scripture-profession of Christianity, in the brethren of Bohemia, who being animated by the spirit of the scriptures, wholly separated themselves from the Papists and from the Calixtines, now joined to them, and having chose ministers of the church of their own company, without regard to human learning, or any other teaching, but what the Spirit of God gave them by a translation of the scriptures, they set up congregations of their own, which, in midst of various persecutions, and manifold afflictions, were preserved in Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, and other places, till the reformation from Popery came to take place in the several Protestant nations. Thus the witnesses appeared alive again, and exalted above philosophy, tradition, and all dependence upon the authority of the church, or of synods and councils ; which was no where the case, for about 1260 years before this notable event happened.

Q. Were not these bold fellows, who separated from the church at that time of day, the Waldenses ?

X. The Waldenses had been long before this notable separation

paration of the brethren of Bohemia. They differed from the Waldenses, and found fault with them on two points, pretty remarkable, in a letter to them of Austria, *A. D.* 1467. 1. They were much offended with them for dissembing their principles at any time, and attending the worship of the Roman church, which they themselves condemned in their hearts; thus basely profaning and polluting themselves, and not confessing with their mouth as they believed in their heart. 2. They condemned the Waldenses for the care in heaping up gold and silver that they observed about them, though the end of it was to help them in time of persecution: for they judged it inconsistent with laying up our treasure in heaven, and with thinking that the evil of the present day is sufficient to it; and they reckoned, according to our Lord's saying, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, that, in the end, they would principally rely on that which they had spared, and laid up for themselves on the earth. Luther says of the brethren of Bohemia, "That they were pinched by poverty, which they relieved by the labour of their hands." And indeed it was no small evidence of the power of the gospel upon them, that it reconciled them to poverty, and taught them to bear their crosses patiently, without ever thinking of defending their religion by the sword, as did the Waldenses and Albigenes.

o. I dare say, this is as like the spirit that breathes in the New Testament, as any thing that could be seen among Christians, since the time when Christianity began to be corrupted. And certainly, it was no less proper for the scripture-prophecy to take notice of this, than of many other events to which interpreters have applied it. This was indeed a remarkable event relating to Christianity and the scriptures, after the corruption of that religion had come to its height, and the authority of the church had triumphed over the scriptures. And so you make this the end of the first reckoning of the 1260 days, or 42 months.

But you hold the time we now live in, as the end of the 42 months applied to the beast with ten horns, or of Daniel's time, times, and an half. And indeed I must own this is a time of darkness to the kingdom of the clergy. I am not surpris'd to find them apprehensive of the danger of their church, by that polite Christianity which comes apace in the room of the superstitious Christianity which has been so long beneficial to them. And indeed, if it go on

and gain ground as fast as it has been doing for some time past, even among those who are gainers by the national religion, nothing can tend more to the ruin of their kingdom; especially if it shall appear, at the same time, that true Christianity is the reverse of a national religion.

A. Thus you have fixed the prophetic times! And now, if the true profession of Christianity remain only with such a people as those who are pretending to it, in opposition to the national religion, I must say it is at a far lower pass than is the kingdom of Antichrist. It is said, that Christianity, in its first and lowest condition, was supported by signs and wonders that raised attention, and awed the multitude; and when these failed, it would certainly have sunk, if it had not got the support of the secular power: but, as the world is not now to be imposed on with signs and miracles, nothing of this kind can be pretended to: And how then can any profession of the primitive Christianity stand or subsist long against national Christianity?

X. There were Epicureans as well as Sadducees in the world, when the testimony concerning Christ's resurrection came first abroad in it, attended with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and these were as witty satirical fellows, and laughed as much at every thing above their reach, as our Atheists or Deists do now. These men who have the front to resist the truth of the resurrection, considering how it is attested, would have treated it in the same manner, if it had happened in their day, as did the Sadducees at Jerusalem, and the philosophers at Athens: yea, the multitude was not so much awed by the miracles, but that they were easily instigated by the Pharisaical Jews, in most places, and by the craftsmen at Ephesus, and by those who made a gain of the devil's prophets at Philippi, to mob the very apostles. And the miracles wrought by the apostles, with the same design, would not hinder our multitude from behaving in the same manner, in favour of the religion of their nation, against that same very Christianity that was taught and instituted by the apostles, or against the apostles themselves, if now alive, and working miracles; for, if they will not hear the scriptures, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

But if any should now pretend to any thing like the apostolic miracles, they would, by that very pretence, declare that the revelation already made in the scriptures is not complete,

complete, or not yet sufficiently documented to have come from God; and therefore would be justly suspected of making themselves liable to the curse pronounced in the end of the New Testament.

There were signs and wonders accompanying Antichrist; and all the antichristian world boasts, one way or other, of signs and wonders wrought in confirmation of the religion of their nation. But these are no more equal to the signs and miracles that attended the giving out of the New-testament revelation, than those things done by the magicians of Egypt came the full length of the signs and wonders that the Lord wrought by Moses. And of this sort are all the signs that have no other use in the minds of men, but to seduce them from the kingdom that is not of this world, and to confirm them in subjection to church-authority supported with secular power.

The New Testament declares, that when the Christian revelation should be perfect, or completely given out, the extraordinary things that accompanied it while it was in coming forth, should vanish away and cease, for then the use and end of them ceased: And, instead of any other thing coming in place of them, to make the gospel regarded, we are told, their remain *faith, hope, and charity* the greatest of these three, which excel all the extraordinary gifts. Where-ever these are produced by the gospel, and appear in the profession or outward practice of them, there is Christianity in its power; there it shews itself in its proper glory, and will raise attention, and be opposed by the antichristian world, that has the form of godliness, denying the power of it, yea, and be hated by the polite Christians, as well as the superstitious. Nevertheless, faith will be very rare on the earth when Christ comes.

A. And must not they pretend to something extraordinary, who set up illiterate tradesmen to preach, and submit to them as their teachers? Must they not hold them as inspired?

X. I do not hear that the Waldenses, the followers of Peter Valdo, pretended to any signs or wonders; yet Dupin gives this account of them: "Valdo being a person of some learning, explained the New Testament to them in the vulgar tongue; he instructed them so well, that they took a fancy — to preach and teach, although they were but laics, and without mission. The clergy of Lyons having rebuked them, they began to declaim against ecclesiastics." And again he says of them, "Being desirous

“to make up a society of persons that should practise the
“precepts of the gospel, according to the letter, and re-
“new the apostles manner of life, they embraced several
“superstitious practices; afterward they assumed to them-
“selves the power of preaching, although laics, and with-
“out mission. The clergy opposing their preaching, they
“stood up against the prelates, and shook off the yoke of
“obedience.” Nor did the brethren of Bohemia pretend
to any signs or wonders, but rested in those wrought by the
prophets and apostles, whom alone they held as inspired by
the Spirit of God, to make the revelation of his mind and
will to men; yet, for a long time, they had none but illi-
terate teachers; for, as Luther says of them, while they
endeavoured to avoid the briers and bogs wherein the so-
phisters and monks were intangled, they wholly abstained
from all study of the arts, being withal pinched by pover-
ty, which they relieved by the labour of their hands. And
while he commends them highly for their wonderful skill
and readiness in the scriptures, he at the same time com-
plains, that not only the Greek and Hebrew tongues, but
the Latin also, were in a manner lost to them. So that it
is no new thing, you see, among the practical believers of
the gospel, to set up illiterate tradesmen to preach, and sub-
mit to them as their teachers, without holding them as in-
spired.

So likewise this people deny inspiration to ordinary teach-
ers, who have no commission to make any new revelation,
as the apostles and prophets had; but to teach, exhort, and
guide the church, in the observation of all things whatso-
ever Christ commanded the apostles, as they are written in
the scriptures, and were observed by the first Christians,
under the direction of the apostles, who have recorded
their practice, and the things they taught them to observe,
in the New Testament, to be followed by Christians to the
end of the world: therefore this people regard the read-
ing of the inspired writings in their churches more than
the teaching of any man whatsoever; and all that their pa-
stors and teachers have to say, must be examined by the
scriptures: for they can only explain the scriptures to them
by the scriptures, and they guide them as a people shew-
ing themselves willing to obey the words of Jesus Christ,
who speaks to them in the scriptures, and not the words of
men; and because they are the disciples of Jesus Christ,
they should call no man master on the earth.

A. But

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A. But how can illiterate men excel in the knowledge of the scriptures, if there be not something extraordinary in the case?

X. Though the critics and metaphysical doctors have turned the gospel into a sort of science, to be taught and learned as other sciences are, by men who propose to make a gain of it in the world, as it now stands; yet indeed it is not a science, or human art, but, as it calls itself, a *word of faith*, and that not human, but divine. The apostles opposed the wisdom of God in this word of faith which they preached, unto the wisdom of the scribe and the disputer of this world; and if you consider their writings, I reckon you will not think they favour of our schools. As a man may excel in science who has no taste of the word of faith, so may one excel in the knowledge of the word of faith, who is a great stranger to what we call science. It is not criticism or philosophy that brings men to the faith, nor can it build them up in it. I was once commending our friend here as a critic upon the New Testament; but what sort of a Christian teacher, or guide, do you think would he make?

And you may as well say, how can an illiterate man excel in faith, hope, and charity? for these depend wholly on a true knowledge of the scripture; or how can one excel in prayer? wherein I have seen a cow-herd excelling learned divines: for, whatever difference be thought of betwixt the gifts of prayer and of preaching, yet both are the gifts of Jesus Christ, who gives pastors and teachers to his church; and, though these may be some way aped, they can never be truly attained by all human art or learning.

e. I own the same things may be said against all supernatural illumination, and faith itself, and especially against your supernatural charity, which is declared to excel the knowledge of all mysteries. And if no supernatural endowment, no gift of God in religion, carrying men further than the force of nature and art, shall be admitted, there is an end of the Christian religion.

Thus far I have inquired into the principles and way of your sect; if I should inquire more particularly into their church-order and worship, I suppose you would refer me to the New Testament, as their only directory, and perhaps suspect me of intending to join them.

X. And when you condescend to examine their order and manner

manner of worship by the New Testament, you will find them ready to drop every thing that you can shew them not to be founded there, and as ready to hearken to you pointing out any thing in that book, that is yet overlooked by them; and for this they are willing to bear the reproach of changeableness and instability. And indeed I wish you never do worse than become one of them.

Θ. Upon the whole, I must acknowledge, if there be any true Christianity in the world, this must be the profession of it.

A. But it is a whim at best, that cannot subsist long, and I cannot vindicate you from being whimsical, in troubling your head so much about it as you have done.

Θ. If they pursue these principles, and stand to them, they will put me to think.

X. I wish they may, for your sake.

A Plea for PURE and UNDEFILED RELIGION.

With an Answer to some Objections moved
against it by a Friend: In a Letter to that
Friend.

2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

[First published in the year 1741.]

To the Honourable

Colonel JAMES GARDINER.

THIS plea for pure and undefiled religion, as a testimony of gratitude and respect, is dedicated by,

His much obliged, and

most humble servant,

JOHN GLAS.

The P L E A.

THE gospel of Jesus Christ stains the pride of man's glorying, and excludes boasting on his part, when it proclaims the glory of the divine perfections in his salvation. And the preaching of peace by Jesus Christ, is a declaration of war against the lusts of this world in our hearts, from which Christ came to save us, and that, not merely as they tend to the disturbance of society, and to our disquiet in this life, but chiefly, as they are opposite to the love of God, and inconsistent with the regard due to the life and immortality that is brought to light, and with conformity to Christ, and subjection to him in his kingdom that is not of this world.

This

This pride and love of the world, to which the gospel is so opposite, is the true cause of infidelity. And the praises infidels are pleased to bestow on some of the laws of the gospel, proceed from a mistake of these laws, as if they carried in them some such flattery of the pride of our own virtue and merit, as we find in the moral philosophy, and as if these laws had been made for such a society as a kingdom of this world.

And all the perversions of the gospel, by them who found their interest in professing some belief of it, have flowed from the same source with infidelity; as they all serve, one way or other, to exalt the wisdom, the merit, and the power and authority of man, against the mercy and grace of the righteous Father, the righteousness of the Son of God, and the office he bears in his church, and the work of his Spirit; and as they all likewise serve some way to indulge, or even approve us in fulfilling the lusts of this world, except in ways that are openly hurtful to a worldly society; for a kingdom of this world cannot flourish without such a fulfilment of these lusts as is plainly condemned in the gospel.

This is visible in the grand perversion of the gospel, and corruption of Christianity, that was beginning to work in the very time of the apostles, and displayed itself in form when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and will continue in some shape or other in the world, till the Lord Jesus destroy it by the brightness of his second coming.

Many instances might be brought from the laws of the gospel, to shew that they are designed unto quite another and higher end than the happiness and prosperity of a nation of this world; and so to manifest, that the author of the Christian religion did not appoint it to be the religion of any nation of this world, but of a people whom God is pleased to take out of every nation, for his name, Acts xv. 14.—17.

The description of *covetousness*, in the law of the gospel against it, is one instance, which, if well understood, may serve abundantly to clear this, though there were no more.

Jesus Christ treats this subject expressly in his discourse to his disciples before the multitude, Luke xii. 15.—40. The occasion of that discourse was, one of the multitude of his hearers saying to him, “ Master, speak to my brother, “ that he divide the inheritance with me,” ver. 13. It seems
this

this man thought his brother ought, in conscience, to grant what he desired, and not did doubt but Christ's judgment in the case, to which he supposed his brother would yield, would be for him. It is like, both the brothers had some respect to Jesus as the Messiah, whom the Jews were expecting as a judge and a divider over them, under whose government they would be a happy nation: and so he was giving him employment, as a judge and divider over him and his brother. This his notion of the Messiah was not very agreeable to the doctrine Jesus was preaching immediately before, but agreeable enough to that faith concerning Christ, which is consistent with the love of this world, and which abounds every where, in the nations called Christian to this day.

Our Lord points out to him his mistake about the office of the Messiah and his kingdom, when he says, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" ver. 14. and, in place of granting his request, begins a discourse against covetousness, which closely accompanies that mistake about the Messiah's kingdom among the Jews to this very day, and is indulged where-ever any such thought of Christ's kingdom is entertained, as if it were of this world.

Though Christ declines the part of a judge in the question betwixt this man and his brother, about the inheritance, he judges of the distemper of his mind, that shewed itself in his petition, and applies himself to the cure. For he shewed himself uneasy at his situation, in comparison with his own brother, and not contented with what he had; and therefore, desirous to better his condition in the world, and to possess more abundance, in a method that was just and equal in his eyes; and this in connection with his being a follower of Christ. This is the plain import of his petition to Jesus Christ. And he is not singular in this: there are still abundance of such followers of Christ, who, if he would grant this desire of possessing a little more abundance, to ease their minds of the fears of straits that may come on them and theirs, that they may be preserved from the misery of being poor and burdensome to others, would be content to follow him as far as he will. But the Lord's answer to this petition, is, "Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." And this answer points out to that man, and all that are of the same mind with him, the true cause of their uneasiness, viz. *covetousness*; and, if we would hearken to it, direct us how our

minds may be more eased than they can be by the greatest possessions.

When he says, "Take heed and beware of covetousness," he signifies, that, in this shape wherein he condemns it, it is covered over with the fairest pretences, which makes it the more dangerous. We are surrounded with temptations to the fulfilment of this lust in all the situations wherein we are placed in the world; and we must watch against it, as a most crafty enemy lying in wait to surprise us, and take away our life: for we can never be truly happy without the victory over it.

The Lord discovers the nature of this evil, and the principle that supports it, when he says, "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The life that Christ came to give his people, was prefigured by the temporal happiness the Israelites hath in the abundance of the things which they possessed in the land of Canaan; but the true life consists in the possession of "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Unto this the patriarchs looked, and would not be satisfied with the type of it: "They desired a better country, that is, an heavenly." The psalmist declares, that life lies in God's favour, not in the abundance of corn and wine, but in the light of his countenance. This is the life that Jesus Christ gives to men; and when he came to bring it clearly to light, he set aside the type of it, which was as a vail over it, and declared plainly, that a man's life consists not in it. And if man's life consist not in the abundance of the things which Israel possessed in the land of promise, which was the life promised to that nation in God's covenant with them, how much less doth it consist in the abundance of any other possessions of this world?

Every vitious inclination of our hearts is supported by some false principle, some error so deeply rooted in our minds, as to determine our choice, even though the judgment of God, against what we chuse to do, be manifest in our consciences. Therefore sin is called darkness, and a state of sin the power of darkness. Now, the error that influences the covetous man in the fulfilment of his lust, in all cases, is this, That a man's life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, even as the pride of life goes upon this principle, That a man's life consists in the gaiety and bravery, the honour and power

power of this world ; and the lust of the flesh is founded in this persuasion, that a man's life lies in the pleasures and ease of the flesh. He that walks in the pride of life, and has his bias that way, values his possessions only as they contribute to that which is his life ; and he can hazard his bodily life, to preserve or attain more of that wherein he imagines his life consists. And the sensual man loves possessions for the sake of his sensual pleasures, and he can part with his possessions, and endanger his bodily life for the pleasures of the flesh, without which it would be no life to him. But the covetous man's life, the ease of his soul, consists in the abundance of possessions ; and though he delights also in worldly honour and power, and in the pleasures of the flesh, yet more in possessing abundance ; for his greatest fear is want ; and this keeps him moderate and sober in the pursuit of honour and pleasure.

The gospel that declares the mercy and grace of God in Christ to us miserable sinners, and brings the true life and immortality to light, bears very hard on the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, and requires the mortification of these lusts in the doing of good works and almsdeeds to all the needy, especially to those of the household of faith, that so we may imitate the grace of the Lord Jesus manifested in our salvation, and declare our lively hope of that eternal glory and pleasure that is promised by him to them who thus obey him. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19. we see the rich man damned for spending that on his pride and vanity, and his luxury, that should have relieved poor Lazarus. The trade of the worldly society might be promoted by his wearing purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day ; and the working poor, whose labour was turned to the service of his lusts, had benefit by him ; and so he might be considered as an useful member of society ; but Lazarus, who was incapable to minister to his lusts, had little help from him. This Lazarus would have been a very fit person for the public care, or for being laid on some of those hospitals and mortifications, which are sacrifices to the pride and vanity of the mortifiers : and so he might have been removed, as a grievance, from the sight of the rich man, whose daily work it should have been to pity and relieve him. By this parable we are also taught, not to look on worldly plenty and prosperity, as any evidence of the divine favour, nor on the

deepest poverty and distress, as a token of his wrath. Yea, fulness of possessions proves a curse, and serves to damn us, without that almsgiving which the gospel requires; and poverty a blessing, when it serves as a mean to wean our hearts from this world, and turn our affections to heavenly things.

As the gospel calls the man of pride and vanity to be mortified to his life, and the sensual luxurious man to his, in the doing of good works and alms, it no less requires the covetous man to be mortified to his life, or to that pleasure and ease his soul would take in abundance possessed, and that this mortification, and his hope of the better and more enduring substance, should appear in the giving of alms. But however far he may agree with the gospel against luxury and pride, (as others will join in condemning his covetousness), yet he will not agree to the sayings of Jesus Christ on this matter, till they be so far explained away, as to leave him room for some ease to his soul, in possessing worldly substance, as a guard against his greatest fear, *viz.* want that may come in this life.

Our Lord describes covetousness farther in the parable of the rich man, whose ground brought forth plentifully, ver. 16.—21. And here he draws the picture of a covetous man agreeably to what he was just before saying of covetousness, but very unlike what is commonly thought.

He supposes the man coming to wealth, not by any indirect or unlawful means, nor by pinching and churlish saving; for he gets it by the providence of God sending him an extraordinary crop far exceeding his living. And when it comes thus to his hand, he appears to be no miser as to enjoying the good of his labour, when he has the prospect of abundance remaining to serve him in many years of greater scarcity that might come afterward: but he would have his soul eased of the fears of future straits, by possessing enough to supply him for many years, through laying up, as conveniently and safely as he could, upon the earth, what God had now provided for him. Thus he placed his life in the abundance of the things he possessed; and in the view of this his life, he eats, drinks, and is merry.

The employment of the husbandman is much like the labour of the ants and bees, and he has his food and raiment, as the fruit of his labour, returning to him at a certain period. Jesus Christ doth not charge covetousness upon this; but supposes it, and so puts the case, of
his

his ground casting up far more to him than is sufficient for his maintenance and present living ; and then the question is, How that should be bestowed ? The man's covetousness resolves him what to do with his well-gotten goods, that so far exceed his yearly living by his ground, as to be a stock for many years to come. He resolves to lay them up in store for himself on the earth, and so makes not rich toward God.

But God says to him, " Thou fool, this night thy soul " shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things " be which thou hast provided ?" Here that which is accounted great wisdom among men, is declared to be folly with God, who calls this man a fool, for providing in this manner against evils that might happen to him in times to come in this life, a great uncertainty, and not providing for death ; a fool in neglecting to do good, and give alms, while he had opportunity, and it was in his power, and that on supposition of what might happen after the time when (for what he knew) his soul might be required of him ; a fool in not securing his treasure better, for the ease of his soul, but laying it up where it might be lost, or be taken from it, where it could afford him no ease after death, and where he could not be certain how, or by whom, it should be used or bestowed after his removal.

The wisdom of Joseph, in providing for the years of famine to come, is by some set in opposition to those words that Jesus Christ puts here in God's mouth. But when we consider Joseph as directing the government of a kingdom of this world, and providing against an evil certainly coming on that kingdom, and so as good as present, this no way answers the case in the parable. And if we consider Joseph as the type of him who is here speaking, and is appointed head over all things to his church, to provide for it as to this life and that which is to come ; and observe, that what he here teaches us, serves to bring us into entire dependence on him as such ; we shall easily perceive that our covetousness can find little encouragement from the history of Joseph. And when we really depend on the true Joseph as our provider, then we shall be under his direction, and take care to do what he is here injoining us.

Our Lord's reflection on his parable, is, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.* The parable shews us what we are to understand by a man's *treasuring,*

treasuring, or laying up in store *to himself*; and the following part of this discourse puts the meaning of *becoming rich towards God*, as a depositary, beyond all doubt: for he says, ver. 33. 34. *Sell that ye have, and give alms; * provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not :---for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* In this manner should the rich man in the parable have *bestowed* his *fruits* and his *goods* which he had to bestow, if he would have been rich toward God; but, in place of this, he would become rich by them in this world, and take the keeping of them into his own hand. These two very different ways of laying up our substance, and making rich, are here opposed to one another; and bestowing in alms all the fruits and goods that we have, or that exceed our living, is required of us, as *making rich towards God*, in opposition to *laying them up to ourselves on the earth*, as in the parable: for, if we be at any such pains to find out how to bestow our goods in alms, as worldly covetous men are at to find how to lay up in store on earth for themselves, our Lord does not so much as suppose that we can be at any loss for room where to bestow them.

They who are influenced by the gospel to bestow their goods in this manner, are acting a wise part in the sight of God, laying up to themselves treasures for eternal life, and providing daily against that certain evil, death, as mortals should do. And both the Old Testament and the New point out this as the best way of providing against wants that may come in this life, as well as it is the only way of laying up worldly substance for eternal life. See Psal. xxxvii. 3. 25. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 17. 18. 19.

The 11th chapter of Ecclesiastes, from the beginning to the 7th verse, agrees remarkably with the doctrine of the New Testament, and with this discourse of our Lord. There the wise man exhorts to almsgiving in this manner: He says, with an allusion to his trade by sea, *Send † thy bread on the waters,---give a portion to seven, and also to eight.* And he compares this giving to the clouds full of rain, emptying upon the earth; even as, Matth. v. 45. Christians are commanded to imitate their Father, who *sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust.* He likewise commends it

* Compare Prov. xix. 17.

† פלו signifies to send, not so properly to cast.

to us under the notion of *sowing*, when he says, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand.* And this is referred to, Gal. vi. 8. 10. where doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith, as we have opportunity, is called *sowing to the Spirit*. His motives to this are, *Thou shalt find it after many days*; like the profits of his Indian or African trade. Compare Luke xvi. 19. and Gal. vi. 6. 8. 9. 10. where laying up to ourselves treasures on the earth, or bestowing them to gratify and fulfil any of our worldly lusts, is called *sowing to the flesh*, of which we *shall reap corruption*; and almsgiving, *sowing to the Spirit*, of which we *shall, in due time, reap life everlasting, if we faint not, and be not weary in this well-doing*; and as many as think and act as if it were otherwise, *deceive themselves, and mock God*; as do all they who pretend to be spiritual, while, in place of this well-doing, they are sowing to the flesh, by making rich in this world. He says next, *For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth*, or, *Thou shalt not know the evil that shall be upon the earth*. And the reason for which the covetous lay up their treasures on the earth, is the very same that Solomon gives here for almsgiving. He says further, *If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north; in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.* Compare Matth. xxv. from ver. 31. to the end, Luke iii. 9. 10. 11. and Rev. xiv. 13.---*Their works do follow them*; and these words in the parable, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; whose then shall these things be?* Lastly, he says, what may serve to obviate the objections arising in our covetous hearts against the alms required in the gospel, when he tells us, “He that observeth the wind, shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds, shall not reap;” and, “Thou knowest not the works of God who doth all.---Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they are both alike good.”

Our Lord's discourse following his parable, in the 12th chapter of Luke, coincides with a part of his sermon on the mount, Matth. chap. vi. ver. 19.—34. which seems to point against the covetousness of the Pharisees, and to explain the fourth petition of his prayer, even as what he says, ver. 14. and 15. explains the fifth. That fourth petition is opposed to thoughtfulness for the future, and is inconsistent with our reckoning any thing we have our own, while the children of God, with whom we pray for
daily

daily bread, are in want of that bread: for, if we have present sufficiency for ourselves and for them, and suffer them to want this day, how can we pray with them, *Give us this day our daily bread?*

The Lord supposes the different conditions his people may be in, as to the things that serve to support their life in the body. Some may be so situated, as not only to have food and raiment sufficient at present, but also to be capable to lay up such things as may be rusted, mothened, or stolen, before there be necessity for them to themselves; and the beginning of his discourse suits best with this sort: for there is not such occasion to exhort them, not to lay these things up in store to themselves on the earth, who have scarce food and raiment at present, and so cannot lay up for the future. What he says, from verse 26. downward, applies better to those who have difficulty to live to-day, and see not how they are to live to-morrow. Though the first sort be not excluded there either: for it is still the fear of future evils in this life, that moves them to lay up such things to themselves on the earth, who have it in their power, that so their minds may be eased of anxiety and disquieting fear about these evils.

We must notice here, in the first place, what are the *treasures* that the Lord speaks of, when he directs us about laying them up. And it is most plainly told us, that they are treasures of such things as may be mothened, rusted, or stolen, if laid up on the earth: so that we are not left to our own imagination, as to what should be meant by the *treasures*. And to deny them to be treasures of such things, would be using too much freedom and boldness with his words.

It must likewise be observed, that he does not absolutely forbid us to lay up treasures of these things to ourselves. On the contrary, he bids us lay them up. But that which he forbids is, laying them up on earth; where they may be rusted, mothened, or stolen; while he commands us to lay them up in heaven, where no such thing can befall them.

And we are not left at any uncertainty as to what should be the meaning of *treasuring treasures* of these things in *heaven*: for, if we explain the scripture by itself, and do not follow our own fancy, to make it say any thing we please, we must take it to signify the giving of these things in alms, as appears most evidently by comparing Luke xii. 21. 33. 34. See likewise Luke xvi. 9. Gal. vi. 6.—10. and 1 Tim. vi.

17. 18. 19. And the apostle speaks of wealth and riches in the matter of alms, 2 Cor. viii. 2. and chap. ix. 6.—11. This is agreeable to what was said in the Proverbs, chap. xix. ver. 17. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.* Almsgiving, then, is lending to the Lord, who hath obliged himself to repay what is so lent, and is able both to give bread for our food, and multiply our seed sown, and increase the fruits of our righteousness: and so it is a laying up with our Father in heaven, the things which, being laid up on the earth, might be mothened, rusted, or stolen, but cannot be lost with him who is abundantly able to perform all that he has promised.

This is a good work much insisted on in the gospel; yea, it is that which is ordinarily intended where we read of *good works* in the New Testament. Doing good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, is the great fruit of the grace of God bestowed on us by Jesus Christ, the evidence of our faith and knowledge of his grace, who for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich, and the proof of the sincerity of our love. By this we shew the subjection of our confession to the gospel of Christ, whereby God is glorified, 2 Cor. ix. 12. 13.; and by this the purification of the heart through faith, shews itself in its excellency above the Pharisaical purification, Luke xi. 41. *But rather give alms of such things as you have, or give the things you have in alms**; and, behold all things are clean unto you. When the apostle James calls us to be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves, he points out this to us as the doing of the word, and calls it *pure and undefiled religion*, in distinction from that fiery zeal and those flaming speeches about the word, wherein those place their vain religion who are hearers only, and not doers, and whose unbridled tongues keep no measures with their practice. James i. 27. “Pure religion, and undefiled before God
“and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and
“widows in their affliction, to keep himself unpotted from
“the world.”

Christ's peculiar people are *zealous of good works*: yet how rare is this distinguishing zeal even among them that

* Τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην.

would be esteemed zealous Christians? There is indeed a great noise made about charity and alms in the Roman church : but, as in that worldly kingdom they are far enough from keeping themselves unspotted from the world ; so, by the merit that is there placed in almsdeeds, these are stated in opposition to the mercy and grace of the Father, and the righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ ; and the fatherless and widows in their affliction are not the chief objects of their alms ; but the enriching of that worldly church, and cherishing the swarms of sturdy holy beggars, is the great work of their charity. At best, the Roman alms favour more of the Pharisee than the Christian. They who separated from that antichristian church, contending for free justification, by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ's blood, against the Popish merit of good works, did a notable service to Jesus Christ, and to the salvation of sinners by him. But the pure and undefiled religion of the gospel should have been more insisted on, and warmly pressed upon the professors of faith in Christ's righteousness, and the zeal of good works should have been more stirred up, in opposition to that sort of religion and works wherein that society, so greatly polluted with the world, had placed merit. If this had been done with as much zeal as the other, there had been no room left for shunning the almsdeeds of the gospel, under pretence of flying from self-righteousness. How much need is there for that warning the apostle gives us, 1 John iii. 7. " Little children, let no man deceive you : He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous ? " The doing of alms, as the gospel requires, at the rate of keeping ourselves unspotted from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and that before him who hath shewed his mercy and grace to us at an infinite rate, is reckoned by some but a low evidence of faith, in comparison with the impressions they feel on their hearts by the word ; a lower evidence of the love of God to us, than that which is in faith itself without works : for they do not duly consider that faith without works is dead ; and that to hear the word with the greatest feeling, without the practice of this pure and undefiled religion, is to hear it and not do it, and so to deceive our own selves. The influences of the Spirit upon mens minds by the word (which are all that many have to shew for the fruits of the gospel) are but as the pains taken on ground, by dressing and watering, to make it fruitful.

fruitful. But the saving influences of the gospel are distinguished from the common, by the fruits, even the practice of pure and undefiled religion, Matth. xiii. 18.—23. Heb. vi. 4.—11. Phil. iv. 17. And the sealing work of the Spirit, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God, is the consequent of our bringing forth fruit in obeying the commandments of the Lord Jesus, John chap. xiv. which is therefore a far greater rarity than the first influences, that are as the dressing and watering of ground to make it fruitful. It is most certain, that without faith in the blood of the Son of God, through whom alone God is accessible to a sinner, it is impossible to please him with any works; but the faith by which we know the only true God, and come to him through Christ's blood, the only atoning sacrifice, shews itself in good works and almsdeeds, which are sacrifices of thanksgiving offered to God by him, well-pleasing to God, and of a sweet smell and favour, Heb. xiii. 15. 16. Phil. iv. 18. When Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing;" he speaks not of this as a low outward evidence, or small attainment; for he places it beyond speaking with tongues, prophesying, understanding all mysteries and knowledge, and the greatest faith of miracles; but he signifies that this may possibly be where true charity is wanting; and in that case, it proceeds from pride, to which the description of charity in that passage is especially opposed. Yet that charity, or love of the truth, which is there declared to be greater than the greatest spiritual gifts, yea, a greater grace than faith and hope, shews itself in good works and almsdeeds, especially to the household of faith, and appears in ministering to them, or in humble services to them, as the apostle says, Heb. chap. vi. where, after signifying that men might be illuminated, taste of the heavenly gift, be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and, after all, fall away irrecoverably, and be as ground oft rained on, bringing forth thorns and briers, rejected, nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, he says, ver. 9. 10. 11. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have

“ ministered to the saints, and do minister : And we desire
 “ that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the
 “ full assurance of hope unto the end.” Thus true charity
 shews itself, and thus it will appear in the judgment at the
 last day, Matth. xxv. 31.—46. where we see good works
 and almsdeeds expressly connected with that eternal life
 which was given us in Christ before the world began, as they
 are likewise, Gal. vi. and 1 Tim. chap. vi.

The practice of this pure and undefiled religion, then, is
 laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven ; yea, the giving
 of our money, our food, and our raiment, to all the poor,
 especially such as are of the household of faith, is such a
 way of laying up against all real straits we may be in while
 this life lasts, as secures what we lay up effectually against
 the rust, the moth, and the thief : for it has God’s faithful
 promise of supplying our need of these things, Matth. vi.
 32. 33. “ Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need
 “ of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
 “ and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added
 “ unto you.” See Prov. xxviii. 27. and Psal. xli. 1. 2. 3.
 Whereas, in treasuring up these things on the earth, we
 have no security given us, that they shall not be lost to us
 before the evils come against which they are provided,
 while, at the same time, they are no provision for eternal
 life ; but piety, or pure and undefiled religion, is *profitable*
unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and
of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. If then we would
 indeed lay up for a time of infirmity, and for old age, or
 for our widows and fatherless children, let us keep ourselves
 unspotted from the world, in doing good, and giving alms
 to the infirm and the old poor, and to the widows and or-
 phans in their affliction ; and let us study to be as diligent in
 this, before him who has shewed mercy and ill-deserved
 goodness to unworthy miserable us, as we see others dili-
 gent in laying up treasures on earth in a lawful way (as they
 call it) for sickness, old age, and for their wives and chil-
 dren after them, as they profess, but really to gratify their
 own lust of covetousness ; for the indolent, and they who
 are far from industry, love themselves and their wives and
 children, and would desire to be easy in old age, no less
 than they ; but they have their present ease, the lust of the
 flesh and the pride of life, to gratify, to which all other
 things must give place.

This way of making rich, and laying up treasures in this
 life,

life, as well as for eternal life, looks indeed very odd ; but the reasons why it is so strange to us, and why we are so much estranged from it, can be no other but such as these : 1st, We do not, at bottom, believe God's word, that *he that giveth to the poor shall not lack* *. And so we have more trust to put in a sufficient man's bond or bill, or such securities as we have for what we lay up on the earth, than we have to put in the security that the Lord of heaven and earth, who keepeth truth for ever, is pleased to give us in his most faithful word ; and yet we would take it very ill to be reckoned infidels. 2^{dly}, He who lendeth to the Lord, and lays up his treasures with him, commits himself to his care, as a child to his father, and depends on him for repayment according to his promise, with resignation to his will as to all the concerns of this life ; but we are not willing to be thus at his disposal ; and being full as much intent upon this life as life eternal, we do not like that we and ours should have no more of the wealth, honour, and ease of this world, than God has promised to his children ; and so we do not incline to fall into his hand ; we chuse rather to venture ourselves and our treasures into the hands of men, if thereby we may attain to that moderate or competent portion (as we call it) of the good things of this life, that we propose as most proper for ourselves and our wives and children. 3^{dly}, We have not been so far changed into the image of the divine mercy and grace in Christ, as to love mercy more than our money, and more than the gratifying of our worldly lusts thereby. Now, " if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him : for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ; but he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever ;" even he that practises pure and undefiled religion. 1 John ii. 15. 16. 17. and chap. iii. 16. 17. 18.

But we must return to our Lord's exhortation, Matth. chap. vi.

He there states a direct opposition betwixt these two ways of laying up treasures of the things that are liable to the moth, the rust, and the thief, upon the earth ; and he expressly forbids the one, and commands the other : so that, when a man has not only bread to eat, and raiment to put

* Prov. xxviii. 27.

on, but, beyond the expense of the maintenance of his family, has likewise to lay up in store against wants and necessities that may happen to him or his in times to come; if the question be put in this case, What shall he do with that which he has to lay up? our Lord's answer comes plainly to this, Lay not up to yourselves treasures of these things on the earth, where they may be lost to you before the evils come against which you laid them up; but lay up to yourselves treasures of these things, by almsgiving, in the hand of your Father in heaven, to whom you pray daily, *Give us this day our daily bread*; and with him, as a depositary, they will be safe, and certainly forthcoming, as he shall know your need in all times; and so you will lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal life.

He presses his exhortation further upon us, by this argument, *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, ver. 12. He is not saying, as some would have it, Though you lay up to yourselves treasures on earth as well as in heaven, yet let not your hearts on that which ye lay up on earth: for he forbids us to lay up treasures on earth, for this reason, Because this will be an evidence of our hearts being set on the earth, and an effectual mean to draw our hearts thither, and to detain them there; and he commands us to lay up treasures with our Father in heaven, because, in that case, our heart will be there; as if he had said, Your heart, your trust, and your affection will be where that is which you lay up in store for yourselves as a foundation against the time to come; therefore let not that which ye lay up be on earth, that your heart be not there; but let what ye lay up be with your Father in heaven, that your heart may be with him also. This argument serves to support the sense that has been given of the foregoing exhortation that is enforced by it. The opposite sense that is put upon that exhortation is variously expressed, but it comes all to this, "Set not your heart on the things that are on the earth, but set your heart on the things which are above, and heavenly things." And so this argument would have no more in it but this, *For where your hearts are set, there will your hearts be set also*. Therefore this gloss, that leads us quite off from the particular scope of the exhortation, by giving us a fair general in the place of it, cannot be admitted, because it destroys the argument, and leaves it without any sense at all; nor can the argument stand with this
turn

turn that has been given to the exhortation, "Lay not up
"to yourselves treasures on earth ONLY, but lay up to
"yourselves treasures ALSO AND CHIEFLY in heaven?"
for the argument that enforces it would then turn to this,
"For so will your heart be not only on the earth, where
"that is which you lay up there, but also and chiefly in
"heaven, where your treasure is chiefly laid up." But if
the argument goes not upon the evil of our hearts being on
the earth, and so not in heaven, it goes on nothing at all:
and when earth and heaven stand in competition for our
heart, as in this passage, can it be said to be there where
it is not chiefly? This gloss, that would give us some en-
couragement to divide our treasures and our hearts betwixt
these two, cannot be reconciled with the account that the
Lord gives of them, in directing us where to lay up our
treasures: for, if we had money to lend, and a friend in
whom we trusted should tell us of two hands that offered,
that the one was a good sure hand, and the other a bad one,
with whom it would be in great hazard, would we make
any question, in that case, about dividing it betwixt the
two?

But lest we should yet imagine, that he has left some
room for us to lay up treasures to ourselves on earth, as well
as in heaven, or to divide our work of laying up some way
betwixt the two, he takes pains to shew us that our hearts,
in that case, will be divided, and certainly cleave at last to
this earth, in opposition to the Father in heaven: he signi-
fies, ver. 22. 23. our *eye* will not be *single*; whatever re-
spect we may pretend to the Father in heaven, and to hea-
venly treasure, we will have an eye to this earth, and to the
things we lay up on it, whereby we shall be effectually dark-
ened as to the heavenly treasures to which this *eye* is *evil*:
for this *evil eye* * being opposite to bounty in almsgiving,

* The *evil eye*, in the style of the scripture, which our Lord's
hearers knew, is opposed to the good or *bountiful eye*, in this man-
ner, Prov. xxii. 9. "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed;
"for he giveth of his bread to the poor." Deut. xv. 7. 8. 9. 10.
11.—"And thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou
"givest him nought."—Prov. xxviii. 22. "He that hasteth
"to be rich, hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall
"come upon him." See likewise chap. xxiii. 6. And simplicity
here ascribed to the eye, is put for liberality, Rom. xii. 8. "He
"that giveth, with simplicity." See likewise in the Greek, 2 Cor.
viii. 2. and ix. 11. 13.

that is connected with the heavenly riches, will darken us in it, and make us go about it grudgingly, and so sparingly. Whatever might be said when God promised store of temporal blessings in earthly places, as a type through which his people were to look, as through a vail, to the spiritual blessings in heavenly places; yet no such thing can be pleaded now, when the Lord has mercifully removed that vail, that we may behold heavenly more clearly, and look directly to the heavenly inheritance, discharging us, at the same time, to set our affections on earthly things, or to mind them, even as they might be minded by them who had them in the covenant under which they were, as types of the things that are above, where Christ now sitteth on the right hand of God.

He pursues this same purpose further, ver. 24. and sets God and the wealth of this world (which he calls *Mammon*) in opposition to one another, as two masters that cannot be served together; so that if we will indeed serve any one of them, we must of necessity despise and hate the other. So far is he from saying, we should not only serve *Mammon*, by making rich in this world, but also and chiefly serve God.

In his reflection on the parable of the unjust steward, whose wisdom is commended (Luke chap. xvi.), he calls the riches of this world, *the mammon of unrighteousness*, or the unrighteous *mammon*, with reference to the unrighteous steward, who made a living to himself out of his lord's goods, when he was put out of his stewardship for wasting them: for we are indeed but stewards to God, as to what we possess of the wealth of this world, and it cannot be righteously bestowed by us, but according to his will who intrusts us with it, that it may be forthcoming to him: so far, then, as it is not applied to his service as he appoints, it becomes an idol to us, and we are unrighteous in all the use we make of it. And thus it is the *mammon of unrighteousness*: not only unrighteous, as being deceitful to them that trust in it, as the steward to his lord, but properly unrighteous with respect to the common use that is made of it, both in gathering and spending it; yea, it is the grand instrument of unrighteousness among men, and a great temptation to all the unrighteousness that is in the world. Our Lord bids us imitate the wisdom (not the injustice) of the unrighteous steward, in making to ourselves friends of the unrighteous *mammon*, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. *i. e.* Give it to the poor, and through

through God's gracious promises, their bills or securities, you shall be received into the heavenly mansions when your life in this world fails. This is what Jesus calls, being *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, when God intrusts us with it; and if we be not thus faithful to our trust as to it, he lets us know we need not pretend that we are trusted with the true wealth, and that if we are not faithful in the false riches, we cannot pretend to be faithful in the true. Then he concludes, as in Matth. vi. 24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Luke xvi. 13. The Pharisees, who were covetous, and yet, perhaps, gave more alms than many great pretenders to Christianity now give, when they heard these things, derided our Lord, because his doctrine of alms, and of the inconsistency of serving God thereby, and serving *Mammon* by laying up the false riches, served to manifest the vanity of their pretences to the service of God: for, it seems, they thought it very ridiculous for one to insinuate, that a man could not both make rich in this world and in the world to come. But he tells them, upon their sneering behaviour, which proceeded from the pride of their own merit and religious character among men, ver. 15. "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God."

Yet this way of thinking was not quite so inexcusable in the Pharisees as it is among Christians, who have the New-testament revelation full and clear. We may indeed wonder, when we read the New Testament with attention, how it could be a prevailing principle among the professors of Christianity, to lay up treasures on earth and in heaven also, if we do not consider what the apostle says, 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11. — "Because they received not the love of the truth, — God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;" even this lie, that we can serve Mammon without hating or despising God, and that the friendship of this world is not enmity with God. When we observe the belief of this lie lying at the bottom of the grand perversion of the gospel, and corruption of Christianity, we need not wonder that our Lord spends so much discourse on this subject.

This his doctrine, with the practice of his followers, re-

corded in the New Testament, explains a prophecy of Isaiah, concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, Isaiah xxxii. 5. to 8. "The fool" (Nabal) "shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful: for the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to speak error to the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. — But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and upon liberal things shall he be established." Here the wisdom of him that layeth up for himself, and is not rich toward God, or who with-holds from the poor what he carefully layeth up on the earth, is declared to be folly, in opposition to the liberal, his devising liberal things; and all the shifts and pretences of the sparing almsgiver, are pointed out as the gospel manifests them to be, wicked, cruel, or unmerciful, and deceitful. The prophet foretels there will be such almsgivers in the gospel-day, but such will the liberality of the gospel be, that their alms shall not be accounted alms, whatever reckoning might have been made of them before. Agreeably to this, we find the apostle speaking of *covetousness* and *bounty* in almsgiving, 2 Cor. ix. 5. And the prophet makes all the religious professions of them who have not this liberality, to be but hypocrisy and lies spoken to the Lord. Compare Isaiah chap. lviii.

Our Lord, in like manner, by this his doctrine, drives on the purpose that was begun in the ministry of John the Baptist, at the dawning of the gospel-day. He said, Luke iii. 9. "Now the axe is laid to the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." And when the people inquired what this fruit should be, he answered, ver. 11. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." This is what he calls fruits worthy of repentance, without which he told the Pharisees, who were covetous, that the things upon which they valued themselves would go for nothing, and be no evidence of their interest in the kingdom of heaven. We may even see how Daniel called Nebuchadnezzar to repentance, Dan. iv. 27. and we may observe how the Lord calls his people to repentance; and this fruit of it, as that, without which, all fasting, and the greatest diligence in the ordinances of worship, signify nothing, Isaiah chap. lviii. But for any to pretend evangelical repentance, and the bringing forth of the fruits of the gospel, without
this

this fruit called for by John the Baptist, is indeed to practise hypocrisy, and speak lies to the Lord. And can we perceive sincerity in giving this always as one of the causes of the public fasts, viz. barrenness and unfruitfulness under the gospel, and means of grace, if this be the fruit that is intended?

Jesus Christ, coming after John, pursues this purpose in his doctrine in such a manner, and to such a length, as to be derided by the Pharisees, who paid tithes of all, and gave alms upon honour; so that to press more liberality than theirs, was ridiculous to them; yea, he astonished his own disciples, when he put covetousness to the last trial, in the young man who was extremely intent upon eternal life in the way of his own righteousness, by calling him to sell whatsoever he had, and give to the poor, and take up the cross and follow him, Mark x. 21. when, upon this trial, it plainly appeared, that he would not part with his possessions for that eternal life; and that therefore he trusted in these possessions, and thought, at bottom, that his life consisted in them, ver. 22. Jesus astonished his disciples, by saying, ver. 23. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter in—" "to the kingdom of God!" And they were yet more astonished, when they heard him say again, ver. 24. — "Children, how hard is it for them **THAT TRUST IN** " **RICHERS**, to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier " for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for " a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Surely it could not increase their astonishment to hear no more but this, that it is impossible only for those rich men who trust in their riches, to enter into the kingdom of God; for it could not be any of the principles of their education, that *trusting in riches* (which was so plainly forbid and condemned in their law, Psal. lxxii. 10. and lii. 6. 7.) was any good sign of a man's standing in the fairest way for entering into the kingdom of God; but it was natural enough for them, who had been educated in the hope of a temporal kingdom of God, and taught to look on riches as a promised blessing, and on the observers of the law that enjoyed them, as highly favoured of God, to be astonished out of measure, when they found their master saying, It is as hard for a rich man to enter that kingdom, as it is for him to be rich without trusting in his riches. And they could not well understand him otherwise, considering the occasion of his speaking. They saw a rich young man, who was

loved by their master for the extraordinary regard to God's commandments, which he shewed in that obedience which had the promise of national happiness to Israel annexed to it, at the same time fearing he lacked something to intitle him to eternal life, and willing to do any thing that Jesus should direct him to, for the obtaining of that life which he earnestly desired. They had just seen this rich man going away *grieved* from his guide to eternal life, when he laid it in the balance to him with his possessions; and this was the reason of his going away, *for he had great possessions.* This, with what their master said upon it, let them see plainly what they never thought of before, and now saw with amazement, how hard it is for a man to be rich, and yet not trust in his riches. And knowing that trusting in riches is a great hinderance to salvation, they expressed their surprise at the discovery of the connection betwixt having riches, and trusting in them: for when, by means of this connection, (appearing with such evidence in the leading instance of the young man), he shewed them how impossible it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, "they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?" Though the gospel does not put this so far to the trial in every one as in this young man, yet we see the apostle grafting an exhortation upon this connection betwixt having riches, and trusting in them, that was taught by our Lord, 1 Tim. vi. 17. 18. 19. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they — trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God; — that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Here is the grand evidence of a rich man's not trusting in riches, but in God, even his becoming rich in almsdeeds; and this is connected with eternal life: so that, let a rich man profess to trust in the living God, and to seek eternal life as much as he will, if that trust in God, and distrust of this world's riches, do not appear in distributing them to the poor, so as to become rich in good works; if that concern for eternal life do not shew itself in his laying up in store to himself a good foundation against the time to come, by doing good, distributing and communicating, his profession is downright hypocrisy and lying to the Lord. Our Lord answers the question of his astonished disciples, by telling them, ver.

27. "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for "with God all things are possible." Such was the rich young man's eagerness for eternal life, that if it had been in man's power to trust in the living God, and not worldly possessions, and to part with them for eternal life, he would certainly have done it; but so much was he under the power of his covetousness, and love to his possessions (which we find, in other instances as well as this, * connected with self-righteousness), that he went away sorrowful from Christ, and from eternal life. Men may sacrifice their riches to the pride of their own merit, as well as their life to their honour, and to a name that shall survive them in this same world: but to forsake all our lusts, and follow Jesus Christ to eternal life, this is above man; and particularly for a rich man to take all his trust off his own merit, and off his riches, and place it wholly in the Son of God for eternal life, so as to become his follower unto that life, bearing his cross after him; this, though it be impossible with men, is the very work of God by the gospel; for, to the power that made the Son of God of a woman, and raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, all things are possible; and this power appears where man's power fails, and shews itself especially in making a rich man bountiful with the bounty of the gospel, and liberal in almsgiving, as it requires.

After all, many a great pretender to Christianity says in his heart, I will make rich and rise in the possessions of this world, or at least carefully preserve all that I have, and yet not set my heart upon it. Thus we can take fire in our bosom, and not be burnt! and thus we take heed and are aware of covetousness! Shall we study to put ourselves in that same situation, or shall we endeavour to preserve ourselves constantly in that very condition, wherein our Lord tells us we shall most hardly enter into his kingdom; and yet, at the same time, pretend to seek that kingdom first, and to trust the promise of adding these things unto us which the nations seek after?

The nations of this world seek what they shall eat and drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed in all times to come, and cannot prosper without great industry in seeking these things; yea, the avarice of some in making and

* Rom. vii. 7.

hoarding money, and the prodigality of others in spending it, are the very pillars that support the trade of the nations ; and if we can reconcile these to the content and moderation that is inseparable from seeking the kingdom of heaven in the first place, then indeed we may think of *national Christianity*, and be well persuaded that Christ's kingdom is of this world.

Though all this be more plain and evident in the New Testament, than many other things for which men have contended earnestly, while, in the mean time, they had liberty to gratify their covetousness and other lusts ; yet, as the corruption of our hearts has, in many respects, corrupted Christianity, by perverting the rule of that most holy religion, and accommodating it to our interests and pursuits in this present evil world, so covetousness, which has a peculiar influence to blind the mind, has induced men to endeavour to overthrow the scope of the foreſaid discourses of our Lord, and to plead to that purpose some texts of the New Testament.

As, *first*, We shall hear 1 Tim. v. 8. insisted on, as if the apostle were there declaring him worse than an infidel, and a denier of the faith, who doth not provide for his family and children, by laying up for them treasures on the earth, to make them live comfortably (as they reckon comfort) after he is taken from them, and to keep them from being burdensome to others.

According to this gloss on the apostle's words, if any man had hearkened to the Lord's discourses on covetousness, or to John Baptist calling for fruits meet for repentance, he could not have been saved, especially he in whom Jesus Christ put covetousness to the greatest trial, if he had done what he was called to, would have been worse than an infidel, and denied the faith ; and the apostles did very ill in suffering the members of the church in Jerusalem to become worse than infidels, and deny the faith, by going far beyond what has been pleaded from our Lord's discourses. Yea, it will be hard, according to this sense of the text, to find one among the Christians, of whom we read in the New Testament as true followers of Christ, who did not deny the faith, and was not worse than an infidel : for it will not be easy to find one among them laying up treasures on earth for himself, or for his children after him.

But it will be manifest to them who look on this text with

with any singleness, that it is rather strong against covetousness and for almsgiving. The apostle, in that passage, is on the subject of the relief of desolate widows, which he calls honour, as he also calls that which is bestowed for the support of the elders; and he says, 1 Tim. v. 4. *But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.* And after the description of a widow indeed, ver. 5. 6. he says, ver. 7. *And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless; and ver. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house (or, and especially those of the household *), he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* From thence he continues on the subject of widows, to ver. 16. where he says, *If any man or woman that believeth, have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.* From all this it plainly appears, that he is so far from calling parents to make rich, and lay up stocks for their children, that, on the contrary, he is pressing the children or nephews of poor widows to be charitable first at home, in providing maintenance for them. This he commends as *piety to their own house*, where they should do alms in the first place; and he commends it likewise as justice or gratitude, *to requite their parents*, who provided food and cloathing for them, when they could not do it for themselves. Then he declares, that they who neglect this piety to their own, especially if these be of the household of faith, do in effect deny the faith, which obliges us to much more almsgiving than that comes to, and which will make us outdo infidels, Jews or Gentiles, in almsdeeds; yea, he is worse than these infidels, who neglects this: for, whatever principle they do it from, they take care of their own poor parents, and relieve their destitute relations. The *providing* here spoke of, cannot be laying up stocks, or making rich in this world: for who imagines that children

* *And especially those of the household, Καὶ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκίαν.* This seems, as Mr Hallet has observed in his notes, to be much the same with *μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τὰς οἰκίας τῆς πίστεως*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. For those of the household here, are such as behoved to be relieved at the charge of the church, if they had not believing children or nephews to do it, and so to keep the church from being charged.

or nephews are obliged to provide in this manner for their poor widows, and to requite their parents in this way? And in the same sense wherein it can be said that these desolate widows must be provided for by their children or nephews, these same children or nephews ought to provide for their own children; as they requite their parents, for the care they took of them, by relieving them with the necessaries of life, so let them take care of their own children till they be able to do for themselves.

This is all that can be made of this text by consequence, concerning provision for our children; for it speaks not directly on that subject. And could it be believed that any man who has eyes in his head, would gravely plead this passage in favour of studying to better our condition in this world, and to make rich in it, instead of making rich toward God? Yet there are men in the Christian world, who will readily plead this text for laying up stocks to their children, and practise accordingly with great industry, whose practise, at the same time, declares they see nothing in this text, that should hinder them to live in the scandalous neglect of this piety toward their poor parents, and other destitute near relations; even as others can see nothing in the gospel that hinders them to make money as fast as they can, and then feed their vanity and luxury with it, let come of the desolate widows and their own children what will. Yea, we may hear words of scripture brought for the pride of life, and for drunkenness and fornication, as well as for covetousness: and it may be a question, if it be altogether consistent with that awful respect due to the words of God, to be at pains to refute these profane turns upon the gospel: yet, because some seriously insist on them, to the hardening of themselves and others in a thing that tends to their destruction, we may take some notice of another text that is brought to the same purpose with the foregoing; and that is,

2 Cor. xii. 14. where the apostle says to the Corinthians, "Behold the third time I am ready to come to you, and
"I will not be burthensome to you; for I seek not yours,
"but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the pa-
"rents, but the parents for the children." From this text it is alledged, that the gospel lays it on parents, as their duty, or at least allows them, to lay up treasures on earth, and make stocks for their children, as they are able.

But as the apostle is here plainly pursuing another scope,
and

and this comes in only as a similitude applied to that scope ; one would think it is not very fair dealing with the scripture, to oppose this to whole discourses treating the subject expressly, and of set purpose. That this is common practice in the nations of this world, is as certain as it is certain there are unjust stewards and judges, that neither fear God, nor regard man, from whom the gospel takes similitudes for our instruction ; but they can be no further applied by us, than the gospel applies them, nor are we warranted to put them to any other use beside what it makes of them. And unless it can be made appear, that the scripture makes every thing lawful to us, which it uses as a type, and from which it takes a similitude, the plea from this text, for laying up treasures on the earth for our children, must be very weak.

And if it were the design of this text, to command parents to lay up for the children, by the same rule, it must be understood to discharge the children to lay up for the parents : but as the scripture elsewhere requires parents to take care of and bring up their children, so it shews that children, when able for it, ought, in piety and grateful requital, to provide for their parents, as in the passage before considered. The patrons of the covetousness that is condemned in the gospel, must therefore reconcile this text with the former, which they chiefly insist on, before they can make any thing out of it for their purpose.

And it is evident, that *laying up*, in this text, can signify no other sort of laying up, but that which the Corinthians should have done for Paul, if he had been burdensome to them, in taking from them as he took from other churches. And what kind of laying up was that ? Were the churches laying up treasures on earth to make the apostles rich in this world ? Or, were they not providing only for their necessities, as the poorest parents are every where doing for their children, and as all ought to do who are in no capacity to make rich ?

It is no less evident, that the apostle, who speaks of himself here as a parent to his children in the faith, did not walk with his other children, according to this rule that he here lays down for the Corinthians : for they were inferior to other churches in this, that he took not relief from them as he did from these. His children in Philippi, particularly, provided for him, as he will not here allow the Corinthians his children to do, for this reason, *Because*

the children ought not to lay up for the parents ; and yet the Philippians are more highly commended for walking contrary to this Corinthian rule, Phil. iv. 14.---18. than the Corinthians seem to be in this passage.

But when we consider how the apostle asserts to this same church his right to be maintained by them, as well as others, and so to live of the gospel, 1 Cor. chap. ix. ; and when we observe that this church took more pressing to raise charity from them, and were not so forward in it as other churches ; and when we also take notice, that the apostle's adversaries easily influenced them against him, by insinuations of his being ready to make a gain of them, whereby it appears they had more of an air of covetousness than other churches, we may easily perceive that he is here insinuating a heavy reflection on them, in giving the reason why he will take nothing from them, in opposition to his adversaries, who were ready to catch them on this point. In this view of the case, these words, *The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children*, seem rather to be the language of the apostle's adversaries at Corinth, to which the Corinthians gave a ready ear ; especially seeing we find him, in the context, using their words so as crafty politicians about religion have fathered them upon the apostle himself, and pleaded them as his words, to countenance them in that which they call *holy guile* ! ver. 16. *Being crafty, I caught you with guile*. Satan, who was making use of the Judaizing teachers at Corinth, against the apostle's ministry, knew well the weak side of these Corinthians, soothed their covetousness, and misrepresented the apostle as seeking to make a gain of them ; and these instruments of Satan took care not to be burdensome to them, while they got their ready ear to their saying, with a reflection on the apostle their father in Christ, *The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children*. To vindicate himself, and chastise them for being so easily imposed on by the soothers of their covetousness, he tells them he had not been, and was resolved not to be burdensome to them ; and makes use of one of the sayings of these teachers to which they gave ear, as if it were a reason why he made them inferior to other churches, in not receiving from them what was otherwise really his due.

And these are the texts of the New Testament that are ordinarily brought to vindicate that covetousness which is described

described and condemned by our Lord in his sermons treating expressly on that subject. As it is usual with some men in scriptural controversies to betake themselves to the light of nature, when they are straitened, and then give out their own opinions as the dictates of nature ; so some have taken occasion, from these texts, to say, That the light of nature taught infidels, and teaches all parents, to make rich in this world to their power, and to lay up stocks for their children. What has been before said, serves to shew how little occasion they have, from these texts, for saying so. And if, by the light of nature, they mean the discovery of God that is made to the minds of men by the works of creation, and the knowledge of his law, and his judgment against sin, in their consciences, it will not be easy to shew, that this light, which sets death, the wages of sin, before the sinner, and serves to fill him with the fear of that death, can manifest to sinful mortals, That it is their duty to seek to rise in the possessions of this world, and lay up treasures on the earth for themselves and their children. It will be a vain attempt to seek countenance to this practice, or to the disposition of heart from which it proceeds, from the light of nature, as it appears either in innocent or fallen man. The principle that influences men to this practice, took place in man's mind, when he found himself not easy and content in all that he possessed, and began to think of possessing the *tree that was pleasant to the eyes*, being persuaded to think that he should *not surely die*. But then the *darkness*, that *comprehends not the light*, had entered the mind of man ; and, under the power of this darkness, he has *found out many inventions* to hide his shame, and divert the just fear of death, and to make himself easy without God, by fulfilling *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. This darkness that rules this present evil world, is, in many instances, put for light, and passes for the light of nature among men ; and so it is in this case. But if, by the light of nature, be meant what nature prompts us to in common with the beasts, as to suckling and cherishing our children, defending them, and relieving their necessities as our own, till they be able to do for themselves, none will deny it ; but nature itself does not teach us to make rich, or, having food and raiment, not to be content therewith, without treasures laid up for wants that may never happen. And there can be no Mam-

mon to serve in a state of mere nature : it is in well-formed societies, that men arise peaceably from cow-herds or begging pedlars, to high stations of worldly riches and power.

The comparing of them to David, who, under a profession of Christian devotion, are, from the meanest condition, climbing as fast as they can to high stations in the world, is an excellent improvement on these principles, whereby the kings of this earth are set on David's throne, and the nations come in place of that nation of which, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. But that laying up treasures on the earth which is condemned by our Lord, cannot find refuge in the Old Testament, or the practice of the saints there, by any other kind of argument, but such as will support polygamy, or any other practice whereby the New Testament is distinguished from the Old. And even when worldly wealth was a blessing, because a promise of the covenant with the fleshly seed of which Christ was to spring, and a type of the true riches, it will be hard to find any saint then, on whom God bestowed largely of these typical riches, on whom he did not also bestow largeness of heart answerable to their wealth ; and therefore churls, who are delighted with the increase of their gain, and grudge any alms they are obliged to bestow, so as to give in the most sparing manner they can, and far below their power, and yet would glory in what they give, and desire to be esteemed and called liberal ; these, at least, cannot claim likeness to any saint of the Old Testament ; nor would they have been easy under the commandments of Moses, or what was enjoined by Nehemiah, chap. v. with respect to the poor. But the grace of the gospel makes true Christians liberal to their power, and willing beyond their power. And what sort of Christians must they be, who would fain betake themselves to the Old Testament for shelter from the influence of Christ's example, and the example of his true followers, as set before us, 2 Cor. viii. 1. 2. 3. 9. ? “ We do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality ; for, to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves. — For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might
“ be

“ be rich.” But we cannot wonder at their hiding themselves from the light and evidence of these examples under the shade of the Old Testament, who fly from the gospel of the kingdom that is not of this world, to the Old Testament, to seek a foundation there for that worldly state of the church by which they have their wealth and power. The Old Testament is glorious in its subserviency to Christ the *Mediator of the new covenant*, the *surety of the better testament*, and king of the *kingdom of heaven*. But to set it thus in opposition to him, is to follow the example of the Jews pleading Moses against him, as exactly as men can follow it under the Christian name, and is, in effect, to deny *that Christ is come in the flesh*.

Jesus, the *Son of God*, lived in this world in that situation from which Christians now fly as they should do from hell; and in the days of his ministry, when he was obliged to others, under the direction of his Father’s providence, for his necessary food and raiment, and for the support of his twelve, even then his little bag lay open to the poor, John xii. 5. 6. and xiii. 29. But great pretenders to Christianity now, whom we must, it seems, believe to be filled with the Spirit of Christ, or provoke the Christian mob, have a spirit much fitter for the state of a wealthy and powerful Old-testament saint, and much better suited to the acquiring of the inheritance of the Old Testament, than to the rich liberality of Jesus in his poverty and affliction. Shall we acknowledge that such men are *led by the Spirit of Christ*? God forbid.

The gospel-doctrine of alms against covetousness, in laying up treasures on the earth, cannot tend to slacken that diligence in our lawful employments which the gospel enjoins for this end, That we may have to give or distribute to the needy, Eph. iv. 28. Acts xx. 34. 35. They who are capable to work with their hands, and can have work, are commanded to keep at their work, as they would keep honesty, and not cast themselves on the charity of any, as if they lacked, or were needy, 1 Thess. iv. 11. 12.; for indeed the apostle declares, That such persons, neglecting their business, let the pretence be what it will, are no fit objects for the alms of the gospel, 2 Thess. iii. 12.—15. There he says, *This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat*. And he appoints this as a cure for idle professors, busy-bodies, that when they get no entertainment but admonitions, they may be obliged, *with quietness, to work*

work and eat their own bread, and so be preserved from being cast out of the brotherhood. Yet when he thus declares them to be no proper objects of alms, lest the evil eye should catch any occasion from hence, to look too narrowly about the needy, and stop the current of the gospel-liberality, (for the evil eye can scarce see a needy person, a fit object), he says, *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.*

BUT we may daily see diligence in the hardest labour, among the working poor, no way connected with any hope or design of mending their condition in the world, or laying up treasures on earth. Necessity indeed drives, but it is the present necessity of food and cloathing, which comes as hard and coarse as their work. And these are the most substantial and useful part of society. *The king is served by the field.* Their labour, and the sweat of their brows, is turned to the ease and pleasure of others. And when a time of scarcity and dearth comes, so that they cannot live by their work, they who are full and easy through their toil, ought, in all reason, to relieve them, and instead of minding the increase of their riches, or even preserving them in such a time, should diminish their stocks to ease them, and so bear burden with them, and take share in the calamity, or else not pretend to humanity, let be Christianity.

And we may see others that work not so hard, perhaps, as the contented poor, who are spurred on to what they do by the desire of mending their condition, and laying up treasures on the earth; and the very end of their work is the possession of abundance, to give them ease from labour and toil. These declare themselves, no doubt, to be acting very christianly in their diligence, when they have the confidence to propose this as an objection against the gospel-doctrine of almsgiving, That it tends to slacken the diligence in our employments that is required in the gospel. But this is the sense of their objection, "If we are not to raise ourselves, and become richer in the world, by our labour, but give that in alms whereby we might rise to more ease, then we shall slacken our diligence, and be at less pains in our employments." This is not an uncharitable construction of the objection, and yet such men would have us look on their industry as a Christian virtue.

Many things may be said in disputing for a thing we are inclined to: suppositions may be made, inferences drawn, and objections started without end, which yet will not stand against the scripture in our own consciences; many specious pretences

pretences may be found out to cover a frame and disposition of our hearts, whereof we would be ashamed, if it were fairly laid open; and prevailing custom and common practice, especially among them that are esteemed in the world for godliness and honesty, is a great bulwark of Satan, and a strong defence to many against the gospel of Christ. But as we must all be made manifest before his judgment-seat, and every one of us must give an account of himself, to him who will judge us by his words in the scriptures, which we have read or heard, and as to which we cannot pretend ignorance, whatever our teachers have, or have not told us; let us for once fairly examine this affair of making rich in this world, and securing our riches the best way we can on the earth, in opposition to the almsgiving that has been described; let us try it by the scriptures before our own consciences, as in the sight of God, and examine the frame and disposition of heart from which it proceeds; and let us see if we can easily satisfy ourselves as to a few questions about it.

As, 1. If it be consistent with that earnest desire of being made conformable to Christ's death, that we may attain conformity to him in his resurrection, which ought to be in every true Christian, Phil. iii. 10. 11. 15.?

2. If it can be fairly reconciled with that mortification to this world, so much pressed in the gospel, as Col. iii. 1. to 7. and with the renunciation of the world that we make in baptism?

3. If it can stand with the contentment in every estate, that Jesus Christ teaches his disciples, Phil. iv. 11. and that is expressly opposed to covetousness, or the love of money, and desire to be rich, 1 Tim. vi. 5.—10. Heb. xiii. 5. 6.?

4. If it can be without a tincture of that great error, that a man's life consists in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, and of this, that we can serve God and Mammon; and if it can consist with seeking first the kingdom of God, and laying hold on eternal life, hid with Christ in God, to appear when he appears?

5. If it be agreeable to a mind duly exercised with the thoughts of death and eternal judgment? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

6. If almsgiving, in this case, can be an imitation of Jesus Christ and his grace; or, if it require any more self-denial, than the Pharisees alms, who derided our Lord's doctrine concerning alms?

7. If

7. If it can prevail where that trust in the living God prevails, that is required in almsgiving; and if it can be vindicated from the trusting in uncertain riches, that is opposed to good works and almsdeeds?

However we may satisfy ourselves as to these, and whatever be the rule of our religion, yet our religion must be tried at last by this scripture-definition of religion, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to keep himself unspotted from the world;" even from "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." And all attempts to reform religion will be to no purpose; all endeavours to purify the outer court of the Lord's house, that has been trodden under foot of the nations, will be in vain, if this religion do not take place as before the man of sin was revealed: and till this appear, pure religion cannot be seen. How comes it then, that while there is so great noise made in the world with zeal for the purity of religion, we hear so little of this religion!

An

An Answer to some Objections moved by a
Friend, against the *Plea for pure and undefiled
Religion* :

In a Letter to that Friend.

DEAR SIR,

ACCORDING to promise, I here send you my thoughts on
your objections against my plea for pure and undefiled
religion.

Obj. 1. You cannot see it more unlawful (if we keep
strictly by the letter of the gospel) to increate our worldly
substance, or to lay up any part of our profits, gained by
lawful industry, for old age, sickbed, famine, or for wife
and children, or any such things as these, than it is to lay
up for to-morrow, or for a week, or a month to come.

Ans. As to *the letter of the gospel* ; if you mean by it the
words wherein God has been pleased to express his mind to
us, which are written to us in the New Testament, and are
to be understood by us as they stand in a consistency toge-
ther, then you may observe how this letter of the gospel is
made of none effect by the Roman church, to establish
their tradition and infallible interpretation ; and how it is
opposed by the Quakers, to set up their spirit or light with-
in ; and likewise by the modern Deists, to set up the same
thing, their light of nature, which they would say is all
that is intended in the gospel, let the letter say what it
will : and this is *Christianity as old as the creation*. In op-
position to these, and all others who do not take the scrip-
ture as its own interpreter, nor hold it as the only rule and
standard of Christianity, we ought to keep strictly by the let-
ter of the gospel, if we are to keep strictly by Christianity,
whatever the consequence be. Though I must at the same
time own, that *the letter of the gospel* is not scripture-style.
I see, indeed, the gospel is called the *Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. in
distinction from the law of Moses, which is styled the letter ;
but the letter of the gospel and the spirit of the gospel is
not a scriptural distinction. Or, if you will insist for it, I
think I do well to hold by the letter, till I get another re-
velation to open that letter, and that again behaved to
have another revelation to lay it open, and so on endlessly ;

for still the distinction betwixt the letter and the spirit, or meaning, might take place. But, as the apostles have used great openness of speech, not as Moses, who put a vail over his face, and I am forbid to look for another revelation, I am resolved to keep strictly by the scripture as its own interpreter, and by the words of the Holy Ghost, as the fittest to express the mind of God to me: for if, by the letter of the gospel, you mean nothing else but the letters and sounds of words, and consider them not as serving to convey any meaning to our minds, then the letter, in this case, cannot make any thing lawful or unlawful.

Now, as to what you say of laying up for to-morrow, or for a week, or a month to come, perhaps I do not understand it; but it seems you mean, that, having food and raiment that may serve for a man's use next day, week, or month, or may be used for that time by another, in case of his death, is so far the same with increasing our worldly substance, or laying up any part of our profits for old age, sickbed, &c. after we are provided with the present food and raiment, that if the gospel condemn the one, it must, at the same time, condemn the other.

A man may be providing for his family's subsistence for next day, week, or month, who is daily becoming poorer; yea, and it is daily done by thousands that have no hope of becoming richer than they are: and I cannot say it is a great compliment to the letter of the gospel, to alledge, that it makes this the same case, and puts it to the same account, with the case of a man who not only lives by his industry, but, over and above that, is, every year, month, week, or day, if you please, laying up some part of that wherein his profit exceeds his living, for many years, in case he should become useless by age, or for his widow and children, in case of his dying sooner. The letter of the gospel cannot condemn the first case, unless you would suppose, that it condemns the Lord himself, which is impossible: for I reckon you will not deny, that his raiment, which the soldiers parted among them, and his coat, for which they cast lots, might serve for next day, week, or month. And the letter of the gospel cannot be said to make that unlawful, which it allows and supposes to be lawful. In the 12th chapter of Luke's gospel, it supposes the industry of the husbandman who provides seed for his ground, that returns to him with profit, not till after some months, and when it comes, his living upon it (which I
need

need not describe to you) is supposed and allowed ; but, over and above all this, he has an extraordinary profit in a year of great plenty, which may serve for many years to come. The letter of the gospel says, he ought to have given this in alms, and so made rich with it toward God, and condemns him for laying it up, or treasuring it up for himself on the earth. And this may serve to shew, that it cannot appear, from the letter of the gospel, to be as unlawful for a husbandman to reserve his seed to be cast into the ground in its season, and to have his living off his crop till the next come in, as it is for him to treasure of it up to himself for years to come *. The same thing may said as to any other lawful employment. It cannot appear from the letter of the gospel, that it is no more unlawful for one to make rich by his employment, than it is for him to have the necessary materials for labouring in it, or to live by it as it casts up his living to him. And so likewise, as to a man who lives on the yearly rent of his estate, it would be a very bad inference to say, that, because it is unlawful for him to add to his estate, by treasuring up any part of that which is over his living, therefore it must be unlawful for him to live by his rent, as it casts up to him yearly. And if we apply it to widows and orphans, and old infirm persons, to the naked and the hungry, whom we are bound to clothe and to feed, we will be straitened to find any rule in the gospel, obliging us to make them rich with our alms, or allowing them to make rich upon alms ; nor shall we find any rule in the gospel, to hinder us from giving the naked raiment that may serve them for next day, week, or month, or them from taking it ; or to hinder us from giving the hungry food that may serve them for next day, week, or month, or them from receiving it.

Obj. 2. You cannot understand how I should say, that if a person should thus lay up any part of his profits so gained (although at the same time in the practice also of giving a part to the poor), the same is his treasure and idol, &c. ;

* If it is only setting his heart and affection upon a thing in itself lawfully done, that is condemned ; then it is true the same censure might as well have been passed upon his reserving his seed, and providing his living out of that year's crop, till the next came in, as upon his laying up of it for years to come. But the Lord censures this practice of laying up for himself, as proceeding from, and manifesting that covetous set of heart which is no where said to be so discovered in the other.

and how yet, at the same time, I should acknowledge a person may retain wife and children, houses and lands, &c., and none of these his idol. You do not well understand how the one can be an idol, and not the other also. You cannot make the difference betwixt a person's acquiring, by his lawful industry, an idol, as I would make it, and another person's retaining an idol handed down to him by his forefathers.

Ans. You seem to lay much stress, both here and in what you say afterward, on the word *idolatry*; which, if we take in its largest sense, is to be found in every sin, and particularly in all the ways wherein men love this present evil world, as it is set in opposition to God in the New Testament, telling us, that whosoever will be a friend of it is the enemy of God; and especially covetousness is expressly called idolatry. If this be the same that is forbid in the tenth command, it must differ both from the idolatry that is expressly forbid in the first command, and from that forbid expressly in the second, by which the nation of Israel brake covenant with God.

If we take idolatry in the largest sense wherein it stands in the New Testament, then a person may make an idol of any thing, beside God himself, that he has, or is seeking after, by setting his heart upon it, as it ought only to be set on God and eternal life: yea, a man may make an idol of his wife, and of his children (whom the gospel commands him to love), by loving them beyond the limits of God's law, or with that love that is due to God alone: but a man's retaining his wife (except in the case wherein he must either give up with God or her) can never be made a proof of his making her his idol; at least, it cannot be a proof of it by the gospel, which forbids him to put her away, or to leave her. And the case may happen, wherein our retaining any part of our possessions, will prove that what we possess is our idol. Thus the young man's possessions were his idol, when he would not part with them all, at Christ's call, for eternal life: and yet, before the matter was put to that trial, such was his concern about eternal life, that I dare say he would think his heart preferred it to all the world: so ready are we to deceive ourselves about the disposition of our hearts, and our willingness to good, before it come to the trial! the case of Ananias and Sapphira furnishes us with another instance, that serves to shew the case may happen wherein our retaining any part of our possessions

essions will prove the part retained to be our idol. But the scripture no where makes the retaining of any part of what we possess, in every case, to be a proof of idolatry, or that our hearts are where what we have is. Even the communion of goods, as it is called, which was peculiar to the church in Jerusalem, was not so enjoined there, but that they might lawfully forbear to sell their lands, or have the money of them, when sold, as their own. "Whiles it remained," said Peter to Ananias, "was it not thine own? and after "it was sold, was it not in thine own power?"

And now, if the scripture make laying up, or treasuring to ourselves treasures on the earth, a proof of our hearts being there, this must make a very wide difference betwixt retaining any part of what we possess, and our laying up more, or adding by our industry to our earthly possessions.

The idolatry (as you notice I told you before) lies in the disposition of the person's heart who lays up, which is, his inclination to be rich, in opposition to contentment in his present condition, and in opposition to trust in the living God, and his *love of money*, which is the true spring of that industry that tends to laying up treasures on the earth, in distinction from the lawful industry or diligence in our employments, that tends to no more but our daily bread, and to give to him that needeth, as being content with the present food and raiment. Therefore, the treasure, or that which is laid up, can be an idol, in that way, only to him who is treasuring it, or laying it up by his industry: and when he is turned from that disposition, and repents, and so lays up no more, but being content with what he possesses, gives that in alms which he might now lay up on the earth, and so treasures to himself treasures in heaven; he is then no more an idolater in that way, *i. e.* it no more appears that his heart is on the earth, by his treasuring to himself treasures there. This may be easily understood by a parallel instance. The scripture forbids a man to touch a woman, but his own wife. If a man keep not himself within this limit, he is so far an idolater, a lover of that fleshly pleasure more than God, and so far an enemy to God, as he is not subject to his law in that matter. But if he repent of fornications, and cleave to one woman as his wife, with whom perhaps he had also committed fornication before, he is now no more an idolater in the way of fornication: and yet, in the way that is in itself lawful, he may be more devoted to his wife than to God, and so be an idolater still; but no man can prove
him

him to be an idolater by his keeping to his own wife, and not touching another. Yea, one who turns from treasuring to himself treasures on the earth, unto almsgiving, and not only gives that in alms which he might lay up on the earth, but also part of his living, and yet further, all that he hath, may, after all, be an idolater in giving alms, as acting in it from a principle of pride and self-merit, and not from charity; so that the grace of God might shew itself in saving him from his own righteousness and pride, and in making him truly charitable, but I cannot prove him to be an idolater by his abounding in alms. So that the question still recurs, Has the scripture declared, that our heart will be on the earth, in opposition to heaven, if we be treasuring to ourselves treasures on the earth? or has it declared, that treasuring to ourselves treasures on earth is the service of *Mammon*, as treasuring to ourselves treasures in heaven is the service of God?

As to your comparison and judgment concerning them in whom the grace of God shines most; it is best for us not to trust too much to the sense we may sometimes have of our own willingness, as an evidence of the grace of God, while that willingness is not put to the proof, and while we are not exercised in deeds and works that manifest it. The grace of God shines in turning men every one from that lust to which he is most devoted, to serve the living God, especially in opposition to that. And the scripture is the only rule by which we ought to measure the appearance of God's grace. As to covetousness and almsgiving; Zaccheus had been most devoted to riches, and we see how the grace of God shined in him. The Lord institutes a comparison betwixt the widow's mite, and what the rich gave of their abundance, and gives the preference to the mite. And if he makes so little of the alms that men give of their abundance, what then will he make of the alms of those who, over and above their abundance, are also laying up and making themselves more abundant in riches? The apostle declares, how much the grace of God shined in the churches of Macedonia, and shews how much God would be glorified by that imitation of them, and of the Lord Jesus, to which he exhorts the Corinthians, and calls it God's unspeakable gift. The grace that is bestowed on us sinners, shined originally in him who knew no sin, in that, while he was himself ministered unto, he gave to the poor, from the little bag

bag that served for his daily living, John xiii. 29. and that was sometimes empty, Matth. xvii. 27.

Obj. 3. You say, "If there be an inseparable connection betwixt a person's so increasing his substance in this world and idolatry, then I cannot see how believers under the law can be freed from having been idolaters, seeing many of them were in this practice of laying up or increasing their substance, idolatry being plainly forbid under the law as well as under the gospel."

Ans. Here I think you are doubling on the word *idolatry* (as I hinted before), and not considering the great difference betwixt the Old Testament and the New, in this, as in several other things.

Polygamy and divorce, except in case of fornication, is declared by our Lord, in the New Testament, to be contrary to the primitive institution of marriage, when he discharges it, and yet it was allowed in Israel, and Moses gave them a precept about divorce.

They were commanded to defend the kingdom of God by arms, and cursed if they did not arm against the enemies of the Lord, and come out to fight, where he helped them to overcome and kill them; and by faith some of the Old-testament saints subdued kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. But I reckon you will not from this infer, that this defence of the kingdom of God is now lawful under the New Testament, or consistent with the nature of God's kingdom now, and with our Lord's dying testimony, and the following of him, and with the faith and patience of the saints.

Elias called for fire from heaven to destroy mens lives, and was countenanced highly in the answer to his call; but you see what the Lord says to his disciples, when they propose an imitation of him in that.

Believers under the law were circumcised, and circumcised their children in faith, and in obedience to the command that had the threatening of cutting off annexed to it; yet the New Testament testifies, that if we be circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing; which is as strong as any thing that has been said about making rich in this world: And you would not infer from this, that Christ profited the Old-testament saints nothing.

They were in bondage under the elements of the world, and observed days, and months, and times, and years, yea, and observed them in faith, and in obedience to God's commands,

mands, and so likewise they served the tabernacle; but if we should follow them in that, the apostle says to us, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain;" and, "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."

In God's earthly kingdom, there was occasion for those whom he made wise for managing the affairs of that kingdom, (as Solomon), to glory in their wisdom, and for their mighty men of valour to glory in the strength he gave them for their worldly warfare, and for those who enjoyed his promise of wealth (as Solomon did in the highest degree) to glory in their riches; but now all occasion for this is removed with the setting aside of that worldly kingdom, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Let not the wise glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these I delight, saith the Lord." And this knowledge of the mercy, judgment, and righteousness that God exercised in the death and resurrection of Christ, shews itself in doing justly, and loving mercy, (or pure and undefiled religion), and walking humbly with our God.

No doubt, they who did not make use of the promised wealth, as a type of the true riches of the heavenly inheritance, were idolaters in the large New-testament sense of idolatry; but when earthly wealth is no more a type of the heavenly, nor promised in the new covenant under which we are, and which, on the contrary, connects conformity to Christ, in his humiliation and self-denial in this life, with conformity to him in his glory in the life to come; in this case, to be affected toward riches, as the Old-testament saints were, is the same as to be affected like them toward the worldly sanctuary, the sacrifices, and the worldly kingdom. It would not have been easy to persuade a saint of the Old Testament, that it was right for him to sell his part in the promised land, or to take joyfully the spoiling of his goods there, by the enemies of the Lord; and yet you see, to the contrary, what effect the pouring out of the New-testament spirit had upon the first Jewish converts, putting the greatest difference betwixt them and the unbelievers, who, in their zeal for the old covenant, and love of wealth, were the most bitter enemies to Christ, as their posterity are to this day,
though

though without the temple, and the land of Canaan, yet having the old desire after riches, and prospering in the pursuit of them, under the curse of God.

Obj. 4. Again, you say, "What is become of all those since Christ came in the flesh, and that some of them were, and others of them yet are, in their own eyes, and in the judgment of charity of others, looked on as disciples of Christ; and yet some of them were, and others of them yet are in this practice? Sure, conform to this doctrine, those of them that are dead have died in a sad delusion, as those of them are in that are still alive; and, in place of being disciples of Christ, or Christians, nothing but idolaters."

Ans. The disciples of Christ, whose practice is recorded for our imitation in the New Testament, the only rule by which we are to judge of Christ's disciples, do not come into this reckoning; not one of them can be found to have been in this practice. The mystery of iniquity was indeed working in their time: and there were some going under the Christian name, even teachers, studying to reconcile Christianity and Judaism, and minding earthly things, opposing the blessed purpose of conformity to Christ's humiliation and death, in Christ's true disciples; and some supposed that gain was godliness; but such were the forerunners of Antichrist, who denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

In the third century, I find Cyprian complaining of this as a great fault among the professors of Christianity, and a cause of God's wrath and displeasure against them, that *they were studying to augment their patrimony.*

After this, when the man of sin was fully revealed, the outward profession of Christianity could not be measured by the rule of God's word, and the woman was hid from the face of the serpent in the wilderness, where she was nourished (as Elijah) for a time, times, and an half: and, during that time of confusion and disorder in the visible profession of Christianity, it would be hard to reason from the practice of any professor of it, in order to shew the lawfulness of any thing that the letter of the gospel makes unlawful.

Yet, even in the fifteenth century, I find the brethren of Bohemia declaring their offence against the Waldenses for this practice, and condemning them, by the 6th chapter of Matthew, for laying up to themselves treasures on the earth for a time of persecution. The Waldenses are still

looked on as disciples of Christ; but the practice of the reputed godly can never make that lawful, which the only rule of godliness makes unlawful, yea, though they were really what they are reputed.

But it is not every one who, in his own eyes, and in the charitable judgment of others, is looked on as a disciple of Christ, that can be called a disciple according to the New Testament. And I must observe, that you seem to forget what the Lord said of the most highly esteemed for godliness in his day, on occasion of their ridiculing his doctrine concerning alms, and the impossibility of serving God and Mammon: "He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God." And, at the same time, I think I may warn you to beware of that evil that the apostle points out to Christians, 2 Cor. x. 12.

By your argument, from the practice of some reputed disciples of Christ, I might undertake to prove that there is no idolatry in the worship of the church of Rome, and that the worshippers in that church are not idolaters; and yet you will not deny, that the worship of that church is idolatrous in the strictest sense; for I can tell you, with as great confidence as you can say that Christ's people have made rich, that the Lord's people have lived and died in the communion of that church; and I am sure you would not vindicate the worship of that idolatrous church by the practice of the Waldenses who attended it, and yet are famous among Protestants to this day, as disciples of Christ.

Obj. 5. You want to know, why I should refuse an explanation of Matth. vi. ver. 19. 21. and yet see a necessity to explain ver. 20. as also other texts quoted by you; and you think our Lord himself explains the 19th and 21st verses, and some other verses following, by the 33d verse of that same chapter, where it is said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God," &c. or, as Luke has it, "But rather seek ye," &c.; and you say the two verses quoted by me, and some of the following verses, plainly explain what *those things* are that are there promised to be added.

Ans. Though I refused your explanation of the 19th and 21st verses of the 6th chapter of Matthew, because to me it appears to destroy the text, and disagrees with the parallel passage in the 12th chapter of Luke; yet I insist for an explication of them, and a sense that appears to me necessarily

rily imported in the words, both as they stand in the Greek and in our translation, and perfectly agreeable to the strain of the New Testament, and the practice of the Lord, and of all his followers, recorded in the scriptures.

You know I shew what are the things we are forbid to lay up on earth, and commanded to lay up in heaven, from what is said of the moth and rust corrupting, and of thieves stealing; and that I plead these words, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth*, or, *Do not treasure to yourselves treasures on the earth*, cannot be taken to signify no more but this, “Do not make that which you lay up on the earth your treasure;” or, “When you lay up corruptible things that may be stolen on the earth, do not set your hearts on these things as your portion.” Against this gloss, which appears, at first sight, to offer violence to the text, I pleaded the opposite command in the 20th verse, *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, or, *Treasure to yourselves treasures in heaven*, which I shewed, from Luke xii. 33. the scripture has not left you nor me either to explain; for it gives the meaning of these words expressly; to which also these other scriptures agree, Luke xvi. 9. Gal. vi. 6.—10. 1 Tim. vi. 18. 19. And I likewise pleaded that motive which the Lord makes use of to enforce his exhortation, ver. 21. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*; which, according to your gloss, can mean no more but this, “Where your heart is, there will your heart be also;” or, “Where you place your treasure, there will you place your treasure also.” And the absurdity of this needs not be further pointed out.

You also, on the other hand, endeavour to fix your sense of, *Lay not up — treasures upon earth*, by the opposite command, *Lay up — treasures in heaven*, which you make to be setting our heart and affections on things above, that is, making these things our treasure: and this is all you would have to be intended in the expression. And I again insist for the sense * of that expression which the scripture itself

* That sense is in our Lord's words, Luke xii. 33. 34. “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” After this, one would think it very bold to say, that our Lord means not *giving alms*, by *laying up*

self gives me in the parallel place, Luke chap. xii. and say, That, to lay up treasures of things that might be corrupted, or stolen, if laid up on the earth; to lay up treasures of such things in heaven, is to give them in alms, to give them to the poor, and so lend them to the Lord; and this is sowing to the Spirit, of which life everlasting is reaped; this is laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life; and thus we make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. If we be thus treasuring to ourselves treasures in heaven, and not treasuring to ourselves treasures on the earth, our Lord signifies to us, it will be an evidence that our heart and affection is set on things above, and not on things on the earth; and, at the same time, a mean of taking our affections off earthly things to heavenly; and the reverse will be, if we be treasuring to ourselves treasures on the earth: *for, says he, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

As for the other texts quoted by you, that you alledge I saw a necessity to explain, I wish you had put me in mind of them, because I may mistake your meaning, and overlook the texts you have in your view. I remember of two texts that you wanted to palm senses upon, that put me upon shewing, that the words of those texts, as they stand in connection with the rest of the scripture, could not bear those senses; and, at the same time, I thought I was vindicating the scripture style and way of speaking, from an imputation that, in my view, was injurious. The texts were, *Take no thought for to-morrow; and, Sell that ye have, and give alms.*

As to the first, if I remember right, I told you, that neither the Greek word, nor the English phrase, *taking thought*, by which that word is rendered, could bear that sense that you wanted to fix upon it; for neither of them signify mere simple thinking, but thinking with anxiety and careful solicitousness, burdening the mind: and to this agrees an expression the Lord uses on this subject in the

to ourselves treasures in heaven, but something else. And yet when this question, concerning making rich in this world, is duly considered, the lawfulness of it cannot be supported without denying that the Lord means almsgiving, by laying up treasures in heaven, i. e., refusing his sense of his own words.

parallel

parallel passage, Luke xii. 29. *Neither be of doubtful mind; or, as it is on the margin, Live not in careful suspense.* And, as *taking thought for the morrow* stands in connection with the context, it must signify taking the care and burden of our life, our food and raiment to-morrow, upon our own thoughts, instead of casting it upon our Father in heaven, and in opposition to doing our duty this day, in seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and in opposition to contentment with the present food and raiment he gives us, and to submission to his will as to our life to-morrow, and what he shall then see needful for us; and, in a word, in opposition to that frame of mind that is necessary for the business of laying up to ourselves treasures in heaven. This, as I take it, is the literal sense (pardon the expression) of, *Taking no thought for to-morrow**; but if I mistake not, the sense you wanted to fix upon it, was, that we should not so much as think, let be to say, *On the morrow, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.* And, I must own, this is a treatment of the letter of the gospel that any author would think himself injured by as to his writings.

And, as I took it, *Sell that ye have, and give alms*, was treated much in the same manner, to shew that it is as unlawful, by the letter of the gospel, to have that food and raiment wherewith we are called to be content, as to make rich in this world with that which we have to give to him that needeth: for the sense of the words, as you would have it, came to this, that a Christian ought not to have

* *Take no thought.* This prohibition, Μη μεριμνήτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν, and μη μεριμνήετε ἐν τῇ αὐρίῳ, is pointed against storing up to ourselves treasures on the earth, against the evil or covetous eye, and against the service of Mammon, ver. 19.—23. 24. 25. and Luke xii. 21. 22. and it is set against the Gentiles seeking what to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be clothed, to which our seeking first the kingdom of God is opposed, ver. 31. 32. 33. with Luke xii. 29. 30. 31. And the Lord presses this prohibition upon his people, by the peculiar care of their Father about them, without whose providence their taking thought can avail them nothing, and by the promise to them seeking the kingdom of God first, that *these things* they would take thought about *shall be added* to them, ver. 26. 27. 30. 31. 33. 34. with Luke xii. 30. 31. 32. 33.; and as it is thus stated, it can be a prohibition of nothing else but that very temper of mind that is absolutely necessary to our making ourselves rich in this world, though it do not always reach that end.

any

any thing whatsoever unfold; that he ought not to *have to give to him that needeth*; that no Christian ought to *have this world's good, or life*, from which he can shew his bowels toward his brother, whom he seeth have need, by relieving him off the life that he himself hath; and that every Christian ought to *have lack of others*, and not *eat his own bread*; because, if after a man has been some time a professor of the gospel, and had opportunity to sell whatsoever he hath, if he hath any thing whatsoever unfold, he is living a life of disobedience to the gospel in this letter of it, *Sell that ye have, and give alms*.

And thus, by turning this positive precept into a negative, that it may be on a footing with the prohibition to make rich in this world, and forcing the words to say more than they can say, either in a consistency with the rest of the gospel, or as they stand in that passage, in opposition to the evil that is there condemned, you are so fond as to think you have evaded the force of what is pleaded from the express law of Jesus Christ, and from the whole strain of the gospel, against making rich in this world. And after this, I need not wonder that some of our people's words, on this subject, have been so much wiredrawn, and absurd inferences made from them, and these fastened upon them, in order to ridicule the doctrine they were maintaining, that a Christian should fly from the desire to be rich in this world, and instead of that, should make rich toward God by almsgiving. And this same doctrine is the more confirmed to me, the more I see it opposed in this manner. The truth of the gospel disdains such a method of maintaining it, and scorns this sort of opposition to it.

For my part, who can make nothing of the gospel without the letter of it, and therefore resolve to hold by the letter, I am persuaded that the gospel commands Christians to *study to do their own business* or affairs, and to *work with their own hands, that they may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have lack of nothing*, or of no man, and likewise that they may *have to give to him that needeth*; and, at the same time, I am no less persuaded that the same gospel commands us to *sell that we have, and give alms*, and so to *provide ourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*, and that because *where our treasure is, there will our heart be also*. And I think I can direct you to a case stated by the Lord himself,

self, and to which this last command has a plain reference, whereby you may perceive that I hold no inconsistency in holding by both these commands of the gospel.

The rich man's ground, in the parable, was his living: his business that he had to do, that he might have lack of no man, walk honestly, and give to him that needeth, was about that ground. In keeping this ground, the instruments needful for his business, and his seed unfold, and in living on the product of his ground, as it cast up to him, he did nothing that the gospel condemns; but when it cast up more than this, and the question was, where he should bestow this that he now had, to the best advantage? and he laid it up, and treasured it to himself on the earth, then he did contrary to that command of the gospel, *Sell that ye have, and give alms, &c.* He should, if he had been wise, have sold what he thus had to sell, and distributed it among the poor, and so made rich with it toward God, instead of treasuring it on the earth for many years, against famine, sickness, or old age, that might happen to him; and such as he is every one that treasureth to himself, and is not rich toward God. From the case thus stated, and this conclusion made upon it, the Lord infers an exhortation to his disciples, thus, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on. — And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind: for all these things do the nations of the world seek after. — But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. — Sell that ye have, and give alms," &c. From which you may understand, that your *Sell that ye have, and give alms*, and, *Take no thought for the morrow*, must lead you again to this, *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, and must fasten that on you which you wanted to shake off, viz. the doctrine that condemns our enriching ourselves in this world, as the service of Mammon; and, instead of that, commends almsgiving, as the service of God, that has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. And this same doctrine that appears so frightful to you, that you would give up with the letter of the gospel to save yourself from it, appeared so amiable and divine to Grotius, a noted writer for the truth of Christianity, that he scruples not to draw an argument from

from it for the truth of the gospel, and to shew to infidels the excellency of Christianity above all other religions.

You will not, I think, come better off with Matth. vi. 33, which you give me as our Lord's own explication of the 19th and following verses of that chapter, nor with Luke xii. 31. to which I am ready to suspect you refer me, for the sake of the English word *rather*; as to which you may see Eph. iv. 28. To Luke xii. 31. then, to which you have appealed, you shall go. And there, when I ask, What is the duty that is laid upon us in these words, *Seek ye the kingdom of God*, in distinction from the nations of the world? the context leaves you not to your own discretion as to the answer. You will be ready to think you have done enough, when you have told me of faith and prayer, and some agreeable motions and desires of the heart toward that kingdom; and you may enlarge upon these excellent things as much as you please, while, at the same time, you imagine we may practise as the nations of the world do, as to what they shall eat, and drink, and put on, in all time that may come, the furthest off as well as the nearest, and yet have our hearts in the opposite disposition to them, and in the first place, or rather, intent on the kingdom of heaven. But the text speaks of a practice, whereby our faith in prayer, and the intentness of our minds and hearts on God's kingdom, shall appear in opposition to the practice of the nations of the world. And now see what the context says, keeping in mind the introduction to it, from ver. 13. and downward, and beginning at the end of ver. 28. —
 “How much more you, O ye of little faith.” Ver. 29.
 “And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall
 “drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.” Ver. 30. “For
 “all these things do the nations of the world seek after,
 “and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these
 “things.” Ver. 31. “But rather seek ye the kingdom of
 “God, and all these things shall be added unto you.”
 Ver. 32. “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's
 “good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Ver. 33.
 “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves
 “bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that
 “faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth
 “corrupteth.” Ver. 34. “For where your treasure is,
 “there will your heart be also.”

When you consider this, it will not be easy for you to keep, *Sell that you have, and give alms, &c.* out from being

ing imported in the exhortation, *Seek ye the kingdom of God.* And thus I shall own to you, that the 33d verse of Matth. chap. vi. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,* agrees exactly, though in another way than you thought of, with the 19th, 20th, and 21st verses of that chapter. And in doing as I am there directed, I have the promise that God will add to me in time coming, as he sees I then need, those things that the men of the nations are now adding to themselves against the time to come, and against needs they or theirs may be in; and he will provide those things for me, as far as they can be added unto my enjoying the kingdom which I am seeking in the first place, by giving alms, instead of laying up for these supposed needs myself on the earth.

And let it not be strange to you, that I hold the practice of almsgiving, in opposition to making rich in this world, to be seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: for if the seeking of that kingdom which it is the Father's good pleasure to give to Christ's little flock, be the same with seeking eternal life, then you may see, from Gal. vi. 6.—10. that doing good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith, is sowing to the Spirit, and *he that thus soweth, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*; and if we do not weary and faint in this well-doing, *we shall in due time reap.* And you may also see, from 1 Tim. vi. 6.—12. and 18. 19. that if we would lay hold on eternal life, fighting the good fight of faith, we must flee the love of money, and the will or desire to be rich, being content with the food and raiment which we have; and that, if we have the wealth of this world, we must “do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store, or treasuring up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life.” And thus we seek the kingdom of God, or eternal life, by almsgiving, as the nations of the world seek to lay up a foundation to themselves for this life, in time to come, by laying up treasures on the earth.

Nor let it offend you, that I call this *seeking God's righteousness*: for, suppose that to be the righteousness that is wrought already by Jesus Christ, to which we can add nothing, and which alone can justify us, or intitle us to the kingdom, and to eternal life: what is it that the gospel

calls us to, as our duty with respect to that righteousness revealed in the gospel? Is it not to believe it, and to bring forth the fruits of that faith? Is it not to give all diligence to make sure to ourselves an interest in it, by these fruits of faith? And is not this done by the labour of love, in ministering to the saints? Heb. vi. 10. 11. And you see how our interest in that righteousness, or our title to the kingdom, through it, will be manifested at last, Matth. xxv. 34.—40. Is not he then, who is labouring in the work there spoke of, seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness? The pure and undefiled religion mentioned by James, and the fruit meet for repentance, spoke of by John Baptist, is a very notable part of our conformity to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and to the Father's love in giving him; and as John says, *He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*; he condescends on this as the great instance of it, see 1 John iii. 7. 16. 17. 18. and compare 2 Cor. ix. 9. 10. and Isaiah lviii. 7. 8. which, if you consider, serves to let you see that almsgiving is not so foreign to his righteousness as you would be ready to imagine. Yea, and this is it to which God's promise, of adding these things to us, in the time of our need that may come, which the Gentiles seek to add to themselves, is annexed, both in the Old-testament prophecy and in the New Testament; see Psal. xxxvii. 25. 26. Psal. xli. 1. 2. 3. Heb. xiii. 1. 2. 3. 5. 6.

Obj. 6. You say, "I think also, that there is something relating to this in what our Lord says unto his apostles, when first sending them out to preach the gospel. Then he says unto them, *Provide nothing for your journey*, as you have it in Matthew chap. x.; and yet afterwards says (being about to leave them), *When I sent you without purse, &c. lacked ye any thing? they said, Nothing. But now, said he, he that hath a purse, let him take it, &c.* as you have it in Luke chap. xxii."

Ans. To this I only answer in a word: Look how the apostles, after Christ left them, and the first Christians, did with their purses; and then see what you can make of that word, as they observed it, for making rich in this world.

Obj. 7. You say, after a commendation of Paul, to which I heartily agree, "When exhorting the church of Corinth to a liberal contribution for the poor saints, he says, *I speak not by commandment, &c.* and again only says, *As every man hath purposed in his heart, so let him*
" give."

“ *give*. By which I think it is plain, the quantity is much
 “ left unto the discretion or conscience of the giver, and
 “ no where that I know of ascertained by the apostle. Nei-
 “ ther do I think that the example of the churches of Ma-
 “ cedonia (as to the quantity of their gift) set before the
 “ church of Corinth by the apostle, was any command
 “ from him to them, to give as the churches of Macedonia
 “ had done ; it being testified of them, that they gave be-
 “ yond their power.”

Ans. I own I cannot understand what you mean here by
 its being left to the conscience of the giver ; for, if there
 be no law about it, I cannot see what the conscience of
 right and wrong can have to do with it. But as to alms-
 giving being left to the discretion of the giver, I must ob-
 serve you cannot make out that conclusion * from this
 passage, without going upon such mistakes as I see you
 have fallen into here.

It is not testified of the Macedonians, that they gave be-
 yond their power, but that they were willing beyond their
 power.

And the apostle here exhorts to a liberal contribution,
 in imitation of them, especially in their willingness and
 forwardness in it ; and wants that they should not act in it,
 as doing a thing under the constraint of a command,
 to which they were otherwise unwilling, because he would
 have it as bounty, like the Macedonians, and not as cove-
 tousness, which gives more sparingly and grudgingly, or of
 necessity ; and so he signifies to them, he would not be
 thought to command them to contribute, whether they
 would or not. That would not have been consistent with

* The conclusion here intended is not, That it is left to our dis-
 cretion, whether we shall give alms at all or not, though that might
 be the same way inferred from this passage, as is this conclusion, That
 it is left to the discretion of the giver, whether he shall so give alms,
 as likewise to make rich in this world, or not. If this be not what
 is meant by leaving the quantity to the discretion of the giver, the ar-
 gument is no way pointed to the thing in question. And indeed it is
 nothing to the point in question, though the apostle had left it free
 to the Corinthians, what they should give in that particular collection,
 or whether their charity (that wanted not other channels to flow in)
 should run out as abundantly in the contribution for the saints in Judea
 as did the Macedonian charity. Could it ever be inferred from this,
 That he left it to them, whether they would serve God, by almsgiving,
 and also Mammon, by making rich, or God alone ?

the nature of almsgiving, nor with his call and exhortation to a hearty bountiful contribution, which is true almsgiving, after the example of the Macedonians.

And the gospel no where constrains us with any command to do alms against our wills ; but it requires hearty almsgiving, just as the apostle does in this instance, as a *proof of the sincerity of our love*, which you have overlooked when you cited the first part of the verse, *viz. I speak not by commandment*. Nor have you noticed, that he requires this bountiful sowing in connection with the promise of reaping bountifully, and that he requires it in connection with the glory of God, and demands it as the profession of their subjection to the gospel of Christ. Neither have you observed, that these words, *Every man according as he hath purposed in his heart*, stand in opposition to *grudgingly, or of necessity*, and come in consequence of his threatening to *sowing sparingly, or covetously*, and his promise to bountiful sowing ; and he concludes it with this reason, *For God loveth a cheerful giver*.

And you have not considered all that the apostle says to the Corinthians concerning this contribution, when you affirm he only says, *As every man hath purposed in his heart, so let him give*, and this to shew, that the quantity is left to the giver's discretion. You have not considered these words, *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. Nor have you considered what he had said to them of this same contribution, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And I do not see how much more particular he could be in writing to them, unless he had got a list of what every particular person had, and was able to give, and given a particular direction to every one accordingly ; and that could have amounted to no more than what he does, when he says, *According to that a man hath, and as God hath prospered him*.

And, upon the whole, unless you can say, That the whole obedience of the gospel is left to our discretion, because it must all be unconstrained, and with purpose of heart, you shall never prove from this, or any passage in the gospel, that almsgiving, as it stands opposed to making rich in this world, is left to our discretion. His commandments are not grievous to his children, that overcome the world by faith ; and if the law concerning alms be grievous to us, we might let it alone ; but then let us
not

not pretend to be the children of the Father which is in heaven.

Thus I have run over your objections ; and if I have left any thing untouched, you may put me in mind. What I have said, I think enough for the time. But then, you are not to think that I entertain any such vain or foolish imagination, as to think myself sufficient, in disputing, to match a lust of this world, especially that deceitful one of covetousness, seeing I find myself far from being any thing like a match for the lusts of the world in my own soul. The word of God can cleanse us from them : that weapon is mighty, through God, for casting down strong holds. And if I have said any thing beside that, let it be rejected ; and so, leaving you with these two scriptures, Matth. vi. 22. 23. John iii. 20. 21. I am, &c.

October 6. 1738.

The

The Usefulness of CATECHISMS considered:
In a Letter to a Friend.

2 Tim. 3. 15. From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

[First published in the year 1736.]

S I R,

THIS comes to offer to your consideration, a question previous to that now on the field, about the Assembly's Shorter Catechism; and it is this,

What is the use of catechisms?

Most part of Christians will readily think this a very needless question, and be surpris'd, that any man in his right wits should seriously move it, seeing all sects of Christians have seen it needful to use catechisms, and find their great usefulness, by indisputable experience. The reviser of the assembly's catechism, and he who makes remarks upon him, however great their difference may be otherwise, are perfectly agreed on this head.

An agreement so universal, in a matter of this kind, among the opposite sects of Christians, might incline one to think, there must be a clearer ground in the scripture (the foundation of Christianity) for this, than for those things that are disputed; but a variety of instances may move a suspicion, that their agreement is as little regulated by the Bible, as they are in their differences. It has happened in many cases, that the Christian and learned world has differed widely on points plainly enough taught in the scriptures; and, at the same time, agreed perfectly in things that are not, without the greatest difficulty, if at all, deducible from the scriptures. In some cases, it is enough that a thing cannot be proved to be flatly contradicted in the Bible; and it is sufficient, sometimes, to make it agreeable, that it cannot appear disagreeable at first view; while other things must not be regarded, as having any foundation in the scriptures, as long as the least shift

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or evasion of the evidence that is brought for them can be found out.

Contending parties about church-government are generally agreed on this, That there are general rules in the scripture, which warrant us to do what we think most orderly, and most for edification, according to the times and occasions, which are not the same with those wherein the New Testament was written, but vastly different; yet, in disputing about their forms of church-government, they require of one another demonstrative particular evidence from the scripture, for that about which they contend; even while, in these debates, all of them are fain sometimes to have recourse to the general rules, or they are willing, by agreement, to suppose them.

Neither is there any considerable difference in the Christian world on this, That Christianity is fit to be the religion of a nation, empire, or kingdom of this world; and that the right form of it (*i. e.* every man's own form) should be the prevailing form; and seeing the Bible is liable to so many false interpretations, the true sense of it ought to be expressed in a creed or confession, and established by law, so as the power of the nation of this world, where it is so established, may be employed in its defence, against all opposers. Every party in power is agreed to support the authority of the standard of faith by law established; and every party out of power is agreed, that the power which upholds the reigning confession, should not be employed against themselves. Even they who think forbearance to dissenters the fittest way to support the established church, and who insist on the distinction betwixt Christ's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, have not got so far clear yet of the thought of a worldly kingdom to Christians, as to agree with old Tertullian * and Cyprian †, in what they say of patient suffering for Christianity, even when it may be in the power of Christians to repel force by force; for, it seems, the fathers understood the New Testament too literally, and with too much of a limitation to the times they lived in.

Perhaps you will think I have gone out of my way, to talk to you of the fathers; but now that I have got at them, you must allow me to observe, how much the Christian world is, at this day, agreed in rejecting Cyprian's sense and

* Apol. c. 36. 37. † Ad Demetrianum.

application of Matth. chap. vi. Luke chap. xii. & xvi. in his exhortation to alms-deeds *; and how unanimously they disapprove of the method of laying up for old age, and for our children, that he would there infer from the scriptures. The assembly's shorter catechism expresses the general sense of Christians on this head, in the answer to that question, *What is required in the eighth commandment?* The answer is, *The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.* The text of the New Testament brought to prove this, is 1 Tim. v. 8. which, it seems, did not cast up to Cyprian among the objections which he states to himself against his doctrine of almsgiving, though it be in every body's mouth now: it was pretty natural for him to think, that a text which served to press almsdeeds, could never be improved against almsgiving; and he could not imagine, at that time, that the neglecting to make rich in this world, by means that may be now accounted lawful, was a breach of the eighth commandment. It could not easily enter his mind, that Jesus Christ and his apostles, and their first followers, (who minded nothing less, than the procuring or furthering their wealth in this world, by any means), were all guilty of leading a life of disobedience to the eighth commandment, or of thieving. But if he had lived to see national Christianity, he had been of another mind, and would have used a less literal explication of the scriptures concerning alms, so as to have allowed Christians a little more liberty to see to themselves and their children in this world, by procuring and furthering their wealth: for how can a nation of this world stand, let be flourish, without any in it endeavouring, within the bounds of law, to make rich? It is true, some will allow, and highly commend, all the length Cyprian goes in the matter of alms, to them that please; as they will also readily agree with him on the merit he pleads in almsdeeds †. But, to bind almsgiving on all Christians, as he does by the gospel-law, and with so severe

* De opere et eleemosynis.

† The ancient church sojourning in Rome, thought otherwise concerning merit, when Clemens wrote their minds to the Corinthians thus: *Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν διὰ διληματὶ αὐτῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ κληθέντες, ὃ δὲ ἑαυτῶν διακρίνομεθα, ἔδε διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας σοφίας, ἢ συνέσιως, ἢ εὐσεβείας, ἢ ἔργων ἐν κατεργασάμεθα ἐν ὁσιότητι καρδίας· ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς πίστεως, δι' ἧς πάντα τὰς ἀπ' αἰῶνος ὁ πάντοκράτωρ Θεὸς δικαιώσεν.*

severe reflections on them that shift and neglect it, is what few will now admit of. Yet who doth not appeal to this Cyprian on the affair of the government and discipline of the church? And I may ask again, who is perfectly agreed with him even on that? Yea, I must tell you, it will not be easy to subscribe that same exhortation of his to almsdeeds, without renouncing the scripture-doctrine concerning merit: and indeed, if we have a mind to cleave to the scriptures, we must have the courage to dissent even from the fathers, in many cases; therefore, I assure you, I shall trouble you no more with them.

You must not think I have lost my way by this digression. I have another instance ready for you, to strengthen the suspicion, that any agreement there is among contending parties of Christians, cannot be owing merely to the influence of the scripture, whereby true Christians must be united.

All churches and sects, in their disputes with one another about the sense of the scripture, are much agreed in pleading human authority, where they can plead it, and in magnifying the merit, the wisdom, and holiness of the doctor or doctors, or of the church whose name is the argument. Christians do not seem much afraid of any danger they may be in, of treating their Bible, and even the New Testament, as they see the Jews did the Old. That people could not be blamed for the want of a zeal of the divine authority of the Old-testament scriptures, or for the want of care to preserve them from corruption; but they made these scriptures of none effect to themselves, by setting up human authority in the interpretation of them; so that they put the Messiah to death as a deceiver of the people, and a blasphemer, because he was opposite to the interpretation that the most wise and godly rabbies and fathers had given of the scriptures. Though the Jews were thus far misled, by trusting to these interpreters, who, they thought, might well be supposed to know the mind of God in the scriptures, better than themselves, and better than Jesus and his disciples, who had never learned; yet Christians are not very apprehensive of being misled by the interpretations of Christian doctors, who are to be esteemed wiser and better than themselves; and they even seem to think the humility of the Jewish people, as to the interpretation of the scriptures, not unworthy of their imitation, with application to their own learned and godly interpreters, and to the tradition of their own fathers. Yea, though Protestants readily own,

that the scriptures have been much perverted, and Christianity greatly corrupted, by means of the Christian leaders, (and they pleaded, at first, the authority of the scriptures, against the Roman church), yet every sect of them has now its rabbies and fathers, with their traditions, and some of these are of note among different sects; and their interpretations pass as current for scripture, as ever the interpretations of the Jewish rabbies did among the Jews. The very infidels have the books they write, to seduce Christians, Protestants, from the belief of the scriptures, stuffed with authorities; so sensible are they of the deep impression that human authority has on the generality of Christian minds! They know how much they are devoted to the authority of their doctors; and so bring the very argument against Christianity, that the most part of Christians have for it.

In the very days of the apostles, the disciples were imposed on by teachers, who pretended to tell them the mind of the apostles; and this was the occasion of their beginning to write the New Testament,* that Christians might be thereby guarded against the frauds of tradition, and be able to answer the perverters of the gospel, as Jesus Christ answered Satan, *It is written again*. But after the gospel is fully committed to writing, with a severe prohibition of adding any thing to it, there is no keeping of Christians from the influence of tradition; and, in disputes about the sense of the written word of God, few are satisfied with that answer, *It is written again*. Human authority must cast the balance; and that determines the question to the generality of Christians.

I might add to this, That whatever differences there have been in doctrine, about signs and prophecies that are of a later date than the finishing of the New-testament scripture, the Christian world is pretty much agreed in shewing a regard to them; even they who profess that the signs wrought at the coming forth of the New Testament, were a sufficient confirmation of the mission and testimony of those by whom it was given out, and that prophecy is completed in the New Testament, and who profess to believe the scripture, where it says, *These things should cease*, are yet very ready to demand some regard to latter signs and prophecies, which they scruple not to plead in confirmation of their own form of Christianity; while, at the same time, they readily

* Acts chap. xv.

reject all signs and prophecies that may be pleaded in confirmation of any other opposite form; and there are few zealous Christians of any noted sect, upon whom this has no influence.

If you have not already forgot the purpose for which these instances have been brought, I will drive it on to you by another instance. You know the disputes that have been in the Christian world, about abstinence from certain kinds of meats, on certain days and seasons. Amidst these disputes, the Roman church herself, and all the churches separated from her, seem to be much at one about this, That the decree which looses us Gentiles from the yoke of Moses's law, (Acts xv. 28. 29.), leaves it lawful for us to eat strangled and blood, and renders that as indifferent, and as little necessary to be abstained from, as any other food, from which the law of Moses obliged Israel to abstain; yet they hold, that the same decree makes it necessary for us to abstain from fornication, and from meats offered in sacrifice to idols of the Heathen: and, at the same time, it appears from their *Confessions of Faith*, how much they are of one accord in believing, that synods and councils, with the obligation of their decrees, are manifest from that passage.

Once more, while there have been sharp contentions, even unto blood, about the head of the nation his being the head of the national church, there has been a good agreement upon this, That Christian kings and rulers come in place of the kings and rulers of Israel, or of the heads of Zion, Micah iii. 10. 11.

From these and such like instances, which will easily occur to you, it may appear, there is no reason to wonder, that the reviser of the catechism, and the remarker, who differ so widely in some points of the doctrine of the catechisms, are yet so much of one mind, as to the usefulness of the catechism. It is true, the remarker shows much more regard to the authority of the authors of the catechism, than the reviser does; for he could not contend much more earnestly for the words of the Bible, than he doth for the words of his catechism, nor be much more apprehensive of the danger of any alteration of the Bible-words, than he is of the least change of the assembly's words. The reviser makes a little more free with the catechism, than with the scriptures; otherwise he would as easily have dropt Rom. chap. ix. as what the catechism says of God's decrees and the election; and he had as soon parted with the expressions of

scripture, touching the corruption of our nature, the demerit of every sin, our justification by Christ's obedience, and our condemnation by the disobedience of Adam, as he parts with some of the words wherein these things are expressed in the catechism. But when he goes about to correct the catechism, he is so sensible of the influence of the assembly's authority on mens minds, that he sees need to inform us they were not infallible; yet his performance supposes their authority, and makes the best of it. After all, the usefulness of catechisms remains a fixed point; for, without that, the reviser's labour had been useless: his work is to make the catechism more generally useful. And, indeed, I am ready to believe, it will be the more generally agreeable to the world called Christian, the less agreeable it is to the Bible. But you must be no longer diverted from our question about the use of catechisms.

Now, if we seek a foundation for catechisms in the scripture, we may indeed see there the catechiser, *κατηχέων*, and the catechised, *κατηγόμενος*, Gal. vi. 6. But if I should plead this for makers or explainers of the catechisms, and for repeaters or students of them, I would be doing the same, as if you would plead *παροικία* for one of our parishes, *ἐπισκοπὴ* for our parochial or diocesan bishops, *πρεσβυτερίον* for our classical presbytery over kirk-sessions, *ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἁγίων* for our churches, or *κλήροι* for the clergy: for we have got quite new things for most of the old scripture names; yet our translators have not affixed any thing like the idea of catechisms to this word, either in this text, or in Luke i. 4. Rom. ii. 18. Acts xviii. 25. and xxi. 21. 24. 1 Cor. xiv. 19. The text stands thus in the English Bible, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

As to a teacher, who is not an apostle, his business, with respect to the word, or the scriptures, is not to compendise them, or give us a short abstract of them; but rather to explain them at large, or to tell the same things more largely by mouth; as may be gathered from Acts xv. 30. 31. 32. and Heb. xiii. 22. It can as little appear, that teachers were appointed for composing the set forms of teaching, which we call catechisms, as that men gifted for prayer were appointed to compose set forms of prayer, or exhorters to compose set homilies. It is true, there is a form of prayer set in the Bible; but that form is appointed by him who hath power to furnish us with the Spirit

Spirit of prayer, and to enable us to say it with understanding, and suitable affections; and the inference would be too wide, from him to any other prayer-maker, as to the capacity to compose a proper form of prayer. There are likewise sermons set down in the Bible (as little copied after in our sermons, as the prayer is in our prayers); but these preachings were inspired, and are the rule of faith, which no sermons or homilies since composed, can pretend to. We have no catechism in the Bible; and though we had, as we have something like short sums of the first principles, we could not infer from thence, that uninspired men have power to compose and impose set forms of catechising. It must therefore be surprising, that they who are so much offended with set forms of prayer, as in the church of England, and set homilies for uniformity of preaching, as in Sweden, should be so much attached to a set form of catechising, which, through some dislike at the word *form*, they chuse to call *A directory for catechising*.

The teacher of the word is to explain the Bible, the words of the Bible, which is the word of God. He is not obliged by his office, he is not gifted by Jesus Christ, for explaining any other form of sound words, but that which was set by the inspired writers; and, by the way, I must say, it is intolerable impudence to apply 2 Tim. i. 13. to any form of uninspired mens setting. The teacher's business is to make the ignorant know the holy scriptures, in explaining them by themselves: for, as Protestants profess, the scripture explains itself. The Israelites were commanded to teach their children the words of the law, Deut. vi. 6. 7. And when the Levites went about to teach the people, they behoved to take the book of the law with them, and instruct them out of it, 1 Chron. xvii. 8. 9. 10. He must be cramped in the exercise of his gift of teaching the word, who is obliged to lay open the import of the words of a catechism, as well as of scripture-texts, and to accommodate the one to the other, while the catechumen is burdened with the addition of a human text to the divine, and with the accommodation.

This will be manifest, when you consider, that a catechism like the assembly's, is an extract of the principal theological theses from the polemic divinity, where the scriptures are metaphysically explained; and these theses are laid in the catechism by the logical art, in opposition to the several condemned errors and heresies, with as much condescension to the capacities of the vulgar, as the thing would admit

admit of. Every one of these theses must be some way explained and proved by the scriptures; and the catechumen must get some notion of them, and of the foundation they have in the scriptures, if he be duly taught. But the catechist and catechumen both must be in great distress, where the catechism says what an ignorant person cannot perceive to be founded in the scripture, in matters of pure revelation. Here the catechumen must either give an implicit faith to the catechism, and rest in that, without the scripture (according to common practice), or do nothing.

The doctrine concerning the church, of which the scripture speaks a great deal, is a matter of pure revelation. The shorter catechism mentions it not, but, in opposition to the supposed error of those who deny a catholic visible church, in that question which is also intended against Anabaptism. The question is, "To whom is baptism to be administered?" *Answer*, "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized." Here the teacher must make the ignorant understand the church to be the whole company of them that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, with their infants; and cannot confine this notion of the church, to any particular assembly or sect of Christians: he must shew his catechumen, that this church comprehends all on the globe, who profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, with their infants; and that all congregations, or any kind of particular societies of these, however large, are but members of this catholic body. Next, he must let him understand, that this church is visible, by shewing him how it may be seen; and so give him the distinction betwixt this church which may be seen, and the invisible church which may not now be seen, and is only believed to be. And thus he is put to the trouble of shewing his scholar a church in the scripture, carefully abstracted from any particular society of Christians, and from the whole company of the regenerated, redeemed elect; which, you may think, must cost him some pains: yet this is not all; he must persuade him, that a church, which neither he, nor any other man ever saw, or can see, is the true visible church, whereof all particular churches are but members. And, if I mistake not, (as I am very ready to do upon a point so very metaphysical), the catechumen, if he would be defended from the error on this head, must understand, that the particular visible society

ciety of Christians, whereof he is a member, is a church, and must be so called, for this good reason, because it is a member of that general visible body, the church: and for that same reason, he may be persuaded, that he himself is a church, viz. because he is a part or member of it. And, on the other hand, he must perceive, that the catholic body is visible, because the member of that body, of which member he is a member, is visible; yea, and because he himself is visible.

I dare say you will think, the authors of the catechism had done as well, to have let the catechist and catechumen alone with their Bible on this subject. No doubt they wanted to preserve them from a dangerous error, by expressing a thing clearly and shortly to them, which seemed intended, in the scriptures, about the church, and which even the catechist, if left entirely to the scripture, might not perceive. But, if the first principles, which are the proper subject, especially of a shorter catechism, be not so obvious, nor so clearly expressed in the scripture, as the assembly of divines could express them, the scripture must be a dark book indeed! and it must follow from this, that the scripture is not so good a preservative from error, as the catechism, or the interpretation of a synod or council; upon which we ought therefore to depend, as on the clearest and safest rule of faith.

Yet you find Paul saying to Timothy, *From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* I suppose the scriptures that he knew from a child, were those of the Old Testament, which were darker than the explication of them in the New, that Timothy learned from Paul, and that is now completely written. But, it seems, the catechism-makers think their catechisms more clear for children, and more capable to instruct them, than even the New-testament scripture itself. Whatever they think, I cannot persuade myself, that you will impute heterodoxy or error to this proposition that I would gather from that passage of Paul's epistle to Timothy, with other texts, and from the nature of the thing, viz. "No words are capable to tell the mind of God, so shortly and clearly at once, to young or old, to learned or unlearned, wise or foolish, as the words of the scriptures themselves." Now, if this be the use of catechisms, to give a child, or an ignorant person, a shorter and more clear
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and distinct view of the scripture-doctrine, than is given in the scripture itself, you will not be able to convince me of their usefulness, till you persuade me, by the scriptures, that my proposition is erroneous.

And would not a child's memory, think you, be as well bestowed upon passages of scripture, as first upon some Mother's Catechism, and then on the Shorter Catechism, and after that on the Larger, or some large catechism explaining the Shorter? Or, would you, were it in your choice, have your child's memory filled with the words of men, or with the words of God? Do not think I am here any way pleading for a catechism drawn up in scripture-words: I have seen such catechisms, where all the answers to the questions were in scripture-words; and yet I found the scripture so perverted, in the application of it to the questions, that I could call the catechism nothing else, but an imitation of Satan saying to Christ, when tempting him, *For it is written*. As this did not move our Lord, in the least, to depart from the scripture, as his defence (for his answer was, *It is written again*); so this imitation of Satan should, in nowise, move us to depart from the words of the scripture, to words of mens framing, as a preservative and defence against error, or to depart from our Lord's example, in his answer to the tempter. If we be afraid, lest our children should be misled by perverse applications of scripture-words, I am confident we cannot take a better way to fortify them against this, than to endeavour to have their mind so stocked with a treasure of scripture-words, as they may be in a readiness to answer, *It is written again*. And, if they be trained up, at the same time, in a regard to the authority of the holy scriptures, in opposition to human authority, this will be the best mean to secure them, not only against errors that have been in the world already, or that we may have in our view at present, but against all errors that may cast up afterward, or all new shapes wherein the old may again appear: for what can be called an error in Christianity, but that which is disagreeable to the scriptures? And, if the scriptures be not a sufficient rule to direct us against error in religion, can the deficiency be made up by any human writing? When Paul forewarns the Ephesian elders of false teachers, and of some among themselves arising after his departure, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them, and calls them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock, he commends them to God, and to the
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word of his grace, even to the whole counsel of God, which he had declared to them (now written to us in the scriptures); and with this he leaves them, as a sufficient antidote against all future errors, sufficient to build them up in the faith, and to give them an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. And what more could we desire for our children? Or how shall a young man learn to cleanse his way, but by taking heed thereto, according to God's word?

Take an ignorant person with a catechism, and another of equal capacity and inclination to learn, with the Bible itself; and by the time that the one shall be able to repeat his catechism, and tolerably understand it, and see the justness of the proofs, (for without that he is trained to depend merely on human authority), the other shall be able to give a tolerable account of the *scripture-history*, with the character of Jesus, as drawn in the *gospel*, and copied, as far as it is imitable, by the first Christians, and of the first principles of the oracles of God, or of the doctrine of Christ, and of the evidence brought in the scripture for the truth of them; with this advantage, that he will be habituated to God's words, and ways of speaking, and a regard to them, instead of mens; and stand fairer, all his days, for improvement in true scripture-knowledge, and his knowledge will be more practical, than that of the poor student of the theses of polemical divinity.

A catechism is designed for the instruction of the ignorant in the first principles of the oracles of God; it exhibits milk to babes. And, if the Assembly's Shorter Catechism was designed to set forth these first principles in the shortest easiest manner, and make them more clear to the capacities of children, and of the ignorant, than they are in the New Testament, it would seem, that they who have composed catechisms for children, as introductions to it, and to prepare them for it, are of opinion, that it doth not answer this design; and is, therefore, so far useless, as their introductory catechisms are useful. And certainly, they have not thought the Shorter Catechism clear enough, who saw it needful to compose a catechism by way of an explanation upon it. The pains taken in composing these introductory and explanatory catechisms, upon the Assembly's, with the general reception these have met with, is a fact that sufficiently manifests the common opinion, that the Assembly's Catechism doth not sufficiently answer the end for which it is supposed to be designed, whatever men may profess to

the contrary. Or, you may think, this multiplication of catechisms to the vulgar, by those who thus seek to share in the great regard paid by them to such compositions, looks also very like a plot upon them, to steal them away from searching the scriptures, by filling up, with catechisms, the little time they have for the perusal of their Bible. The assembly of divines themselves, who composed the Shorter Catechism, for such as are of weaker capacity, have also composed a larger one, for such as have made some proficiency in the knowledge of the grounds of religion; and these are directories for catechising both the weaker and stronger. Thus they have taken sufficient care, that all the time the vulgar can have for study and search after knowledge, should be filled up with catechisms, and that the Bible should not be accessible to them, but by their interpretation: for, till they get through this long tract of *catechising*, (whereby they may be sufficiently prepossessed), they make nothing of the Bible, but as it is quoted and applied in the catechisms. Yea, and we see care taken, in the assemblies for worship on the Lord's day, that the vulgar should hear only so much of the scripture read to them, as the preachers explain; and, indeed, they are so trained to depend on the interpretation of the clergy, that they do not care to hear any more of the scripture, but what is explained to them; and the explication is more popular than the text; so that our people are far from needing that exhortation the apostle gave to Christians in his day, "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words." The very children, in learning to read, must first read the catechism, before they be admitted to read the New Testament. And thus I fear, our vulgar was effectually trained in to dependence on the church's interpretation, and, by means of teaching them knowledge, as effectually kept from seeing the scripture with their own eyes here, as in the Roman church.

A catechism composed by fallible men, is not only their own sense of the scriptures, but it also determines what are the truths of the scriptures, proper for the ignorant to be instructed in; and as some things must be left out, the catechism-makers, not only prepossess the ignorant with their interpretation, but are likewise judges for them, what they must know, and what they may well remain ignorant of, without hurt to their souls. The scriptures were written, not only for the wise and learned, but full as much

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for the unwise and ignorant, who are therefore bound to know as much of them, as they are capable to know, by reading or hearing, by meditating on them with prayer, besides attendance on the gift of pastors and teachers: and therefore this cutting and carving on the counsel of God, in composing a set form of knowledge for the ignorant, must be a very hard, as well as a dangerous task. A pastor or teacher, that has the daily inspection of the vulgar, will find a variety of capacities, and a great variety of occasions of insinuating the words of God upon their minds, and see the greatest need of continual dependence on the author of the scriptures, for ability rightly to divide the word of truth among them. But, according to the idea I have of one who labours in rightly dividing the word of God among the people, it cannot but appear very ridiculous to him, to carve a common standard of knowledge, out of the scriptures, for all the variety of weaker capacities, in all the variety of situations wherein they can be placed, for receiving *scripture-knowledge*.

I have before given you an instance, wherein I alledge the Shorter Catechism goes far beyond the capacity of the vulgar, and much farther than the scripture goes on that point; and seeing there is no lack of metaphysics in the catechism, you will easily think of more instances. You may find some things mentioned there, that are scarce named in the Bible; but several things neglected or negligently treated, that are very much taught and inculcated in the New Testament, and therefore most necessary to be known. Take these instances.

The kingdom of heaven, which was the great subject of the preaching of John Baptist in the very dawn of the gospel, and of our Lord and his apostles their preachings, yea, and of his dying testimony.

The two covenants, described and distinguished, Gal. chap. iv. and Heb. chap. viii.

The new commandment, John xiii. 34. 35. on which our Lord preached his last sermon to his disciples, and which is the subject of the whole first epistle of John, and the New Testament is filled with it.

The doctrine of self-denial, and bearing the cross after Christ, which is the lesson he teaches all that would come after him, and which the apostles continually teach in all their writings, and recommend by the example of Jesus Christ,

and by their own copying after him, and make it essential to the character of a Christian.

The pure and undefiled religion, which is described by James. *The fruits meet for repentance*, which are required by Christ's forerunner*, and much pressed by himself and his apostles, and much practised by the first Christians.

The character of Jesus Christ, which is drawn from the life, by the four evangelists, and set forth continually in all the writings of the apostles, and which ought to be imprinted on the heart of every Christian, who ought to be intimately acquainted with the nature of that obedience or righteousness whereby we are justified, and with that pattern to which we must be conformed. And seeing the New Testament takes so much pains on the character of church-members, and gives us the character of church-officers, and particularly of the minister of the word, once and again, every church-member ought to be very well instructed in these things likewise.

However great the importance of these things might be reckoned by the first Christians in the situation wherein they were placed, the authors of the catechism have not, it seems, found themselves, by their situation and circumstances, much concerned to think on them, or to train up their church-members in the knowledge of them. A directory for catechising a whole nation of this world, subjected to the dominion of the clergy, (which is the thing that every sect of catechism-makers would be at), must abstract from many of the words of God that were absolutely necessary for the people whom God took out of the nations for his name, when he first visited them with the gospel. The New Testament itself would be still the fittest book for such a people; but a catechism setting forth as much of the scriptures as is judged meet to be the confession of a nation of this world, and in such a manner as is thought most fit to be confessed by such a nation, is most proper for national Christians.

The explication of the ten words in the catechism, is very abstract from the difference betwixt the state of the church of Israel, and the state of the New-testament church, and is accommodated to any nation of this world, as well as to the nation of Israel. It is true, the fourth commandment is explained so as to oblige all nations,

* Matth. iii. 8. and Luke iii. 8.—11.

not to observe the sabbath there enjoined, but the first day of the week, the sabbath-day that remains to the people of God; but as they could not avoid taking notice of the change of the sabbath, they thus take care to justify the compelling of the nations to keep the sabbatism of the people of God, by virtue of the law given on Sinai to the nation of Israel. The Gentiles, who had not the law written to them on tables of stone, are not to be judged by that law, but by the law written on their hearts, by which, and not by the law of Moses, the apostle convinces them of sin. But he convinces the Jews of sin by the law that was delivered to them on Sinai, and written on the two tables: for when God entered into the peculiar covenant with the family of Jacob, which he redeemed from Egypt, as his nation and kingdom, separated from all the nations of the earth unto him, as his peculiar people, he summed up their duty in the ten words, which were the words of the covenant. All the statutes and judgments he gave them, were his explications upon the ten words, in a suitableness to the peculiar relation betwixt him and them, so that they were bound, by the ten words, to the observation of all these statutes and judgments, and disobedience to any of them was disobedience to the law written on the tables. The sanctuary, with all the ordinances of divine worship thereunto belonging, directed Israel in the observation of the first table, and without these, they could not obey that table, as it was delivered to them. And all those judgments which men have called the judicial law, were not only a directory to Israel, in the observation of the second table, but likewise directed the government and discipline of the nation upon the whole ten words: for thereby, cutting off from among the people, or death, was appointed for the presumptuous neglect of circumcision and the passover, and for the profanation of the instituted worship, and of the sabbath. The Lord Jesus Christ, the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, the mediator of the new covenant, hath abolished the peculiar covenant with Israel; and the application of the law to the peculiar state of that nation, with all the explications and directions to the observation of it, that were adapted to the peculiar state of that nation, and suited to the discovery of God made to that people, of which Christ came, according to the flesh, and which was a figure of the true Israel; and he hath laid the law in the new covenant,

venant, in a suitableness to the discovery of God therein made, and to the state of the true Israel, God's heavenly nation, chosen, redeemed, and called, and born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, out of every nation of this world, without difference. As this is a new kingdom of God, to which he stands related by a new covenant, it has a new heavenly sanctuary, a new priesthood, altar, sacrifice, throne of grace, and new ordinances of divine service, or institutions of worship, belonging to it, and a new sabbath or day of rest, as well as the new rest into which Jesus Christ is entered; a new commandment of peculiar love among the new brotherhood, the true Israel, and a new government, exercised by Jesus Christ, the judge, lawgiver, and king of the kingdom of heaven, who died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living; with a new discipline to be exercised in his name, in the churches of his brethren on the earth, which he hath instituted, Matth. chap. xviii. and 1 Cor. chap. v. and appointed to be done in the closest dependence on himself, and without any dependence on any authority or power but his alone. Now, if the statutes and judgments, directing the worship of Israel, and the discipline of that kingdom of God, were the explication and application of the ten words of the covenant made with that nation, then certainly the laws of the new covenant, written on the hearts of the heavenly nation, cannot be explained or applied, nor can the people of God be duly directed in the observation of them, without the things just now mentioned, which are plain enough in the New Testament. Thus the design of the New Testament, in applying the law to the kingdom of heaven, and to the state of the subjects of that kingdom, sojourning among the nations of this world, is vastly different from the design of the catechism in applying the words of the covenant with the nation of Israel, to a nation or kingdom of this world, brought under the Christian name. And, if the New-testament way of explaining the law be not clear and plain enough, the catechism is very far from serving to make it clearer; and the same thing may be said of all interpretations of it, that serve to accommodate it to the state of national Christians.

The assembly's account of the institutions of worship, is not placed in their explication of the law, tho' they make some general mention of them there. Give me leave to say,

say, their account of the ordinances of worship, as well as of the grace and duty of faith and of repentance, is not so well placed; for, whereas the apostle Paul, after he had convinced all men of sin, and of their subjection to God's judgment by the law, which they were under, directs them immediately to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly; the assembly, after concluding their explication of the law, with a declaration, that all are sinners against it daily, and that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse eternally, instantly give us this question, *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?* and, in answer thereto, point out the grace or duty of faith, afterward defined, with that of repentance, and the diligent use of the ordinances of worship, which they call the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption. I would not have you here to think I am going about to charge the assembly of divines with shifiting in the graces of faith and repentance, as there defined, and the diligent use of these ordinances, to the room and place that is only due to the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to us, and we receive by faith alone: for their definition of justification, and their *Confession of Faith*, on that head, clear them of all charge that can be brought against them, of having any such bad design. But the reviser, who thought fit to make some alteration in the question on justification, has seen meet to make none in the point I am now upon; and you will not help the ignorant from being ready to think, upon this connection, as they see it standing in their catechism, that this saving faith and repentance, with the diligent observance of these ordinances, will deliver them from God's wrath and curse due to them for sin, and bring them into favour with God, and so to go about, by these things, to establish a righteousness of their own: yea, further, they will be very ready to think, that seeing no man is now able to keep the law, God requires of them, in lieu of the obedience of the law, that they seek after these graces, faith and repentance, in the diligent use of these outward means of grace, or ordinances of worship; and if they do this, God requires no more of them, and they have done their duty. That men are very liable to deceive themselves with such imaginations as these, is manifest from what our Lord says of some, who will plead thus for themselves before him,

him, "Thou hast taught in our streets, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, we have prophesied in thy name," &c. However well the assembly meant in this matter, I dare say, a catechist, who wants to keep his catechumen from this grand, but very common mistake, will have hard work with him, on this part of his catechism, to keep him by the words of his catechism, and, at the same time, to preserve him from the mistake.

But, if the ignorant may be led into this dangerous error, beyond the assembly's design, by their way of introducing the ordinances in the catechism, I fear this is managed to the best advantage, for the authority of the clergy, in the answer to that question, *How is the word made effectual to salvation?* Where I must say, they have taken more care of their own authority, as preachers, than of the authority of God, in the preaching of his inspired prophets and apostles, written in the holy scriptures, to be read and heard by us, Luke xvi. 27.—31. Their answer to the question is, *The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.*

The reviser of the Catechism here drops *but especially*; and says, *the reading and the preaching*. This was modest enough. I could have forgiven him, though he had turned the *but especially* upon the reading. But the remarker upon his performance, is very angry with him here, for two reasons.

First, Because he thinks the reviser sets the ordinance of preaching on a level with the bare reading of the word.

It seems, this remarker thinks not the reading, or bare reading, as he says, of the word, an ordinance; yea, it is his opinion, that the preaching of ordinary uninspired ministers of the word, is debased too much, in being put on a level with the bare preaching of the apostles and prophets in the scriptures: for, though the scripture sets the gift of the inspired ministers of the word above that of pastors and teachers*, he would rather reverse that order, than alter a word of his catechism, or derogate, in the least, from the high regard that may be paid by any to the preaching of its doctrine. And whatever the scripture have to say for itself on this head, he has the people fully of his opinion

* Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

here. They love not to look on the apostles and prophets, without the cloathing of the interpretation of their teachers: and I dare say, there is no part of their catechism they understand better, or conform themselves more to, than this. They expect little benefit by the reading of the word, in comparison with what they look for from a solemn discourse of a noted preacher: and therefore you see the most religious of them running together, with the greatest expectations, twenty or thirty, and many more miles, to a solemn occasion of preaching. I call it preaching, because, you know, if any of them go to the sacrament-table, the chief thing they lay themselves open to there, is the fervent discourse or preaching of the server of the table; and, as it is ordinarily some impression made upon them by the minister's preaching that leads them to it, they chuse to go to their darling minister's table. But call them to hearken to their Bible, (which, through God's good providence toward them, is every where at hand), they will readily answer you, as the eunuch answered Philip, when he was reading the Old Testament, and wanted the New-testament revelation to explain it, which Philip came to give him, How can I understand what is read, except the ministers guide me? And the clergy, very tamely, suffer the people to hold their sermons in the same place, as to the whole scriptures, wherein the New Testament stands to the Old. Yet, you will say, the preachings of our Lord and his apostles, in the New Testament, may compare, as to simplicity, clearness, and suitedness to vulgar capacities, (as far as the things of God can be suited to them), with many of their sermons. But, if the honest man, whom you would advise to expect more from his Bible, and some less from his preachers, and to take some more pains on his Bible, should not be so well versed in the scriptures, as to answer you in the words of the eunuch, it is ten to one but he would, Avoid you Satan, and tell you, our catechism says, *The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means, &c.* And, no doubt, you have observed, that when they have not their own preachers at hand, to hear the gospel from their mouth, they think themselves better entertained with the reading of their sermons, wherewith they take care to furnish them in plenty, than with the company of bare or naked apostles and prophets. Yet the apostle says, "We are of God," (and they instructed it): "he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is

“ not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit
“ of truth, and the spirit of error.”

Next, the remarker is of opinion, that the alteration made on this question by the reviser, serves to derogate from the public worship.

Here he speaks, as if the minister's preaching, and the hearing of him preach, were the main thing in the public worship, and as if the reading and hearing of God's own words in the scriptures were no part of that worship. And though the Larger Catechism own, that the word may be read publicly to the congregation, according to Deut. xxxi. 9.—13. and Neh chap. viii. and ix. yet the general practice, and the opinion of the vulgar, agrees fully with him here also. The chief thing the people look after in the public worship, is the minister's preaching; and the ministers are very far from discouraging them in this regard they pay to their preachings, above the preachings of the prophets and apostles, in the scriptures: for they do not take up their time in the public worship, with the bare reading of the word; they take care to fill up that time, as much as may be, with their own discourses, which the catechism makes, and the people believe to be, the especial mean of salvation. While things are in this situation, and the preachings of the apostles and prophets, in the scriptures, are not so much regarded among those that make up the worshipping congregations, as the minister's preachings, I will not deny, that the reviser's alteration of the words of the catechism here, may possibly serve to derogate a little from the public worship, and to slacken the diligence of the people's attendance upon it: but, as this is a lamentable state of things, I must think, it would no way derogate from the public worship, in a congregation of such people as inclined to pay due regard to the words of God, if the *especially* should be turned to the side of the reading: for though this alteration in the public worship would derogate from the honour or worship of the clergy, it would tend the more to the honour of God, and answer much better to the end for which he committed his word to writing.

When the apostles began first to write the New Testament, they gave this reason for it, *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day*, Acts xv. 20. 21. And this, compared with Col. iv. 16. 1 Theff. v. 27. 1 Tim. iv. 13. 2 Pet. i. 15. manifestly shows, that the scriptures were
written,

written, in order to be read in the churches, or worshipping assemblies of Christians; that so, when the apostles should be removed, they might still be heard preach in their writings, as our Lord says of Moses and the prophets, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. — If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," Luke xvi. 27.—31. The scriptures that are cited in the proof of the answer to this question of the catechism, speak of the preaching of the apostles, which we have now only in their writings: and therefore these very scriptures serve to show, that the Spirit of God maketh *especially* the reading of the word an effectual mean of salvation. And considering how the reformation from Popery was brought about, by means of the translating and reading of the scriptures to the people in the vulgar languages, is it not a base ungrateful requital of this goodness of God, in the Protestant clergy, to establish the authority of their own preachings, upon the debasement of the reading of the scriptures?

From all this we may see, that catechisms have been useful to advance the authority of the clergy above the scriptures, and so to set them in the temple of God, to shew themselves as God, exalting themselves above him: for what less can be said, when we see them exalting their words above his, and telling us, if it should be otherwise, that would derogate from the public worship?

As we have been trained up in a way of thinking agreeable to this question of the catechism, and I am apprehensive you may be fortifying yourself against me on this subject by experience, my bias against authorities shall not hinder me from quoting a passage from a famous preacher, and a great observer of the influence of the word upon himself and others *, wherein I have a fair confession in favour of what I have been pleading for. The passage is thus: "One reason why the gospel is so unsuccessful at this day, is, because the simplicity of preaching is neglected. A due application of scripture is best preaching; for confirming which, it is remarkable, that though God may make use of the words of man, in letting in to the meaning of it, yet it is the very scripture-word whereby he ordinarily conveys the comfort or advantage of whatever sort; it is this tool of God's own framing, that works the effect."

* Mr Th. Haliburton's memoirs, p. 141. 142.

The faith or belief of the gospel of Christ, whereby we are saved, is more clearly and plainly described in the New Testament, than in any catechism; and an ignorant person may have a far better notion of that grace, by reading or hearing the New Testament, than by the catechisms. These differ much in their definitions of it, as you may see by comparing one of the old catechisms, framed about the time of the reformation from Popery, with the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. The definition of faith in that shorter catechism, is the darkest of all, and doth not so much as make any express mention of that which the New Testament calls faith; and, by this, as well as by the odd descriptions of it, and of its various acts, in sermons, the minds of the people have been so confounded about it, that they know not well what notion to frame of it. They suppose the truth of the gospel, in their exercises about faith, in such a way, as their minds lie not open to the influence of the evidence of its truth; but that which they aim at in this matter, is to be made to feel in themselves, or to do that (be what it will) that is imported in *receiving and resting on Christ*; and this is what they look for in hearing the ministers preach and offer Christ to them.

When you see these words in the definition of faith, *As he is offered to us in the gospel*, you will be ready to think, this is the gospel written to us in the scriptures; but, if you compare this with the question that speaks of the efficacy of the preaching of the word, above the bare written gospel, you may reasonably suspect the authors of the catechism would have us think, that to believe in Jesus Christ, is to receive and rest on him as he is offered in the minister's preachings. You may vindicate them here, if you please, by their saying plainly in the same catechism, That the scriptures are the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God; and that they teach what we are to believe concerning him, and what he requires of us. And this might be sustained in their behalf, if there had never been such a thing in the world, and among divines, as professing the truths of the gospel, and, at the same time, maintaining opinions and practices that serve to overthrow them. I have heard the Calvinist doctrine, and an Arminian application in the same sermon. The very Roman church holds the great articles of the Christian doctrine. And I own to you, I am jealous of the clergy, where
their

their own authority is any way concerned, let them profess, in words, as much as his Holiness, when he calls himself the servant of the servants of God.

But, however well the assembly of divines may have meant here, the people that are best instructed out of the catechism, take it thus ; and in this they are much encouraged by their chief leaders among the ministry. There is nothing more ordinary with these demagogues, than to assume to themselves all that the apostles say of themselves and their office, in these texts, Rom. x. 13.—17. 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. They put on all the airs of apostles, that they can take to themselves, without their personal qualifications, and their power to instruct their commission ; and, without these, the people are willing to regard them according to their high pretensions : and how then can they but think, that to believe on Christ, is to receive him as they offer him ? It were to be wished, that these ministers did but study the qualities and character of an ordinary minister of the word, described in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, and endeavour to recommend themselves thereby to the people. But their authority does not stand on such a foundation ; for, as it will not bear examination by the scriptures, they decline to submit to such a trial, or even to condescend to satisfy scruplers, as the apostles themselves did not refuse to do. The following copy of a letter I received lately, gives you an instance of this.

S I R,

“ Some few days ago, I had occasion to meet with a
 “ clergyman of note in this place, performing his
 “ annual task of visiting the families of his charge. I was
 “ looked upon as a member of the family, and according-
 “ ly exhorted. He concluded with a solemn declaration to
 “ us all in general, of his ambassadorship, his being sent
 “ of God to bring the word of salvation to the house, &c.
 “ I was not a little puzzled to know what for an ambassa-
 “ dor this was, who pretended to bring me the word of
 “ salvation ; and you need not wonder, seeing it was my o-
 “ pinion, that the ambassadors who brought us that word,
 “ had long ago completed their embassy, and left their
 “ message written to us, to prevent our being imposed on.
 “ Accordingly (with due deference, I hope) I proposed my
 “ scruple

“ scruple to him ; he quickly interrupted me, and turned
 “ off with an Apage. Now, Sir, do you think that Christ,
 “ the true sent of God, or his apostles, would have treat-
 “ ed one that questioned their commission, after this man-
 “ ner ? I shall be glad to hear your mind, since the Re-
 “ verend gentleman himself thinks it not worth his while.

“ I am,

“ S I R,

“ Your humble servant.”

There can be nothing more unlike the first Christians, let be the apostles, than the disposition of such ministers, with respect to the cross. The following distich was written on occasion of a minister of this kind his applying that motto to himself,

Sub pondere crescit.

In English.

He grows under the weight of his burden.

Nota, That minister, indeed, had once the burden of the church's censure in his offer, but refusing to stoop to take it on, it is since quite removed out of his reach ; but still enjoying all the temporal profits of his post, he is now become the very darling of the populace.

*Crescere nil mirum est sub pondere honoris et æris,
 Tale tuum prorsus jam tibi pondus erat ;
 Quod mirum est latet hic, sub pondere crescere crucis,
 Hoc quid sit sed adhuc, non tibi scire datur.*

Englified thus :

Beneath the weight of wealth and fame,
 To grow, appears no wonder :
 This, hitherto, is all the weight
 You have been pressed under.

But still the mystery lies here,
 Under the cross to grow ;
 This, by experience, as yet
 You've not been made to know.

The

The people who hold such ministers as apostles, account their preachings the gospel; and since you and I knew the world, their gospel was the preaching of a minister that zealously pressed personal covenanting; and then it came to be the preaching of those ministers who refused the oath of abjuration, and after that it was the preaching of such ministers as contended for the doctrine of the Marrow, and set forth every man's right to be persuaded that Christ is his; and there behoved to be likewise a zealous cry against Professor Simson, and against the church, for not deposing and excommunicating him. But now the gospel is the testimony to the liberty said to be purchased by Christ, for the majority of the heads of families in every parish, to elect the parish-minister, in opposition to patronages, and to the call of the majority of heritors and elders; and a cry against the delusion of Independency belongs to this gospel; but a testimony to the solemn league and covenant, or a prayer for the revival of the covenanted work of reformation, has been all along inseparable from the gospel of such ministers and their people. Now, to receive and rest on Christ, as offered in this gospel, especially at sacraments, and in discourses at the sacrament-table, (for all these things have had their place there), is, with many people, the saving grace whereby they receive and rest on Christ, as he is offered to them in the gospel.

I am far from thinking, that the authors of the catechism had all these things in view, when they spake of Christ's being offered in the gospel; but, as I said before, they could not but have the minister's preaching especially in their eye, and especially the preaching of those ministers who should pursue the design of the solemn league and covenant; for the catechism is a part of the uniformity therein designed. Accordingly, the people look for the right offer of Christ from these ministers who would appear to them to adhere most strictly to the covenanted reformation, though they live upon the present establishment, perfectly inconsistent with it. But if their character be found on this point among the people, and they take care to make proper mention of the present darling article, they may borrow as much of their sermons as they please from Episcopal and Independent writers, and take a good note from a Popish commentator; yea, let them say with or against the apostles, and cry down brotherly love and charity, as much as ever they cried it up, and meddle

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meddle in politics, encourage seditions and tumults, and study to distress the government of the nation, as much as ever the apostles studied to avoid these things, all will be received by their people as good gospel.

The use of the Shorter Catechism, as a part of the uniformity intended in the covenant, is to afford the ignorant and the weaker sort of the nation, a form of their confession of Christ; because they also must have their share in the national profession of Christianity. In this view it comes in place of the confession of the name of Christ, whereof the scripture speaks, and serves to set it aside. That confession was produced by the teaching of the Bible, and the hearers made it out themselves, from what they heard; they were persuaded by the evidence of the gospel working on their minds, gladly received the scripture doctrine and exhortation, and confessed it freely themselves: but a catechism supplies the ignorant with a confession, which, getting by rote, they who were never influenced by the gospel to confess Christ, may as easily make, as those who are, and is accepted as such by the church that claims a peculiar property in the catechism. And, as it is a part of the foresaid uniformity, it prevents inquiry into the scriptures, and obliges all, from their childhood, to embrace this set of principles, as the true scripture-doctrine; whereas, the confession of Christianity is what a man himself gathers from the scripture, or from teaching in it, and not a form gathered to his hand, and repeated by him.

Thus you have my first attempt on the usefulness of catechisms. If you find me lame on the subject, impute it to the newness of the question, or to my weakness, or to my taking the wrong side of the question, as you please: but I have my aim, if you shall think thoroughly on the subject; which if you do, it shall not displease me, that as many subjects cast up to you, as you see touched in this rhapsody of mine; and it will be a great favour, if you shall please to offer any thing on the question.

I am,

December, 1735. S I R,

Your, &c.

The

The Use of CATECHISMS further considered.

With a more full Account of GOD'S AMBAS-
SADORS; of SAVING FAITH, and of the
FAITH OF DEVILS.

In a Letter to a Friend.

*Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of
me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim.
i. 13.*

[First published in the year 1737.]

S I R,

MY letter to you on the use of catechisms has made many people very angry, and I hear it has been warmly resented from the pulpit; yet no body, so far as I know, undertakes to answer it: not because, they will say, there would be any difficulty in that; but because it is not worth while. And why then (think I) should it be worth the while of *solemn men* to be so angry at it?

I could not be surpris'd to find the popular clergy, with their devotees, shewing their zeal against the letter, seeing it touches their authority in a tender point, and in a manner unexpected, and more free than they have been accustomed to. But I have been listening to hear the grounds they give out for the offence they have taken at it; and, so far as I have heard, they come to this, "That the letter
" not only sets aside the catechism (the mean of enlight-
" ening this land with the light of the gospel), but also
" makes the ordinary ministry of the word useless; and
" further, it sets up the faith of devils in opposition to true
" saving faith."

I understand them well; and indeed I could not expect more ingenuity in an accusation from them. But the charge, as it stands, is very heavy; and, if it could be made good,

would infer the censure due to *darkness arising from the pit*, as some have called it, in opposition to the light of the gospel that is come into the world.

But it can never appear, that, chusing to follow the light that shines in the Bible itself, without any catechism, manifests that love to darkness rather than the light, for which men will be damned. Nor can it be proved, that the holding fast of that form of sound words which was set by the inspired writers, without any form of uninspired mens setting, is a hellish opposition to the light of the gospel that is come into the world.

We are allowed by our most approved interpreter of the Revelation, to say, that the kingdom of antichrist came with darkness arising out of the bottomless pit; and that was a kingdom of clergy or churchmen, compared to locusts *. Shall we then say, that this kingdom came, by holding fast the Bible itself, without any creed or catechism? Shall we receive it as gospel from our pulpit, that this kingdom of darkness came by holding fast the form of sound words that was taught by the apostles, in opposition to all other forms?

And as little can it appear, that the letter makes the preaching of ordinary ministers of the word useless; except we shall hold it proved by such arguing as this, viz.

“ The letter on catechisms sets the gift of the inspired ministers of the word above that of pastors and teachers who are not inspired: therefore it makes the gift of these pastors and teachers useless.

“ The author will not allow Rom. x. 14. 15. to be meant of their preachings, and grudges them the title of ambassadors, which he appropriates to the apostles: therefore he makes their ministry and their preachings useless.

“ He will not allow their sermons to be the rule of faith, yea nor to be a more especial mean of faith, than the preaching of Christ and his apostles in the scriptures: and therefore (whatever he acknowledges concerning pastors and teachers, and their work †) he makes their preaching as useless as he makes catechisms.”

As this way of reasoning plainly tells us what our clergy would have, so a man who is willing to admit these conse-

* Durham on the Rev. chap. ix.

† Let. on catech. above, p. 133. 139. 144.

quences, is ready to pay them all the regard that they themselves can wish.

The moving of a scruple against the application of Rom. x. 14. 15. and 2 Cor. v. 20. and specially of the title *ambassador*, to ordinary uninspired ministers of the word, has raised a great cry. But, considering the use our clergy have made of that title, there is no reason that we should yield it to them, unless they can fairly claim it by the New Testament. The idolatrous church of Rome claimed the title of priests to her clergy; but this was justly rejected by our fathers, together with the sacrifice of the mass: yet our clergy, when they mean to reflect on any that shall pretend to act as ministers of the gospel, and to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, without their mission, never fail to use this text for themselves, and against such invaders of their property, Heb. v. 4. 5. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as Aaron: So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest!" Our fathers denied, that the claim of this distinguishing title to the clergy had any ground in the New Testament, notwithstanding any thing that might be alledged from 1 Cor. ix. 13. 14.; yet this text is insisted on as the grand foundation for the life our ministers have by their stipends, which they plead the *Christian nation* should afford them, even as the priests who attended at the altar, were maintained by the offerings of the nation of Israel at that altar *. How far the title *ambassador*, assumed by the clergy, has been connected with the worship paid to them by

* The Lord hath ordained (Matth. x. 10. Luke x. 7.), That they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel, even as they which ministered about holy things, did eat of the temple, and they which waited at the altar, were partakers with the altar. This ordinance of the Lord took place in the time of the apostles, when the gospel had the greatest influence to make the disciples liberal, and long before there were any legal stipends. But there is a vast difference betwixt *living of the gospel*, and living of an act of parliament, which, by its proper constraining power, raises such livings as the gospel never raised to the apostles from Christ's subjects, or from his willing people; as may appear from the apostles manner of living, and from this, that they were sometimes obliged to work with their hands for necessities to themselves, and those that were with them. And they who pretend to succeed them under the name of *presbyters* or *bishops*, but are very clear for a difference betwixt themselves and

by the nations, or whether there be any idolatry in the religious homage they receive, I leave it to you to consider. But let us see if their claim to this title be any better founded in the New Testament, than is the claim to that of *priest*.

On this subject you must, in the first place, be a critic: for it is observed, "that presbyter, *πρεσβύτερος*, which is "elder, and the word *πρεσβυς*, that signifies to be, or to "act the part of an ambassador, come from the same root, " *πρεσβυς*, in the language wherein the New Testament "was penned." And from this it is concluded, "there can "be no fault in calling a presbyter an ambassador."

Whether they intend this should hold as to those presbyters who are not at all ministers of the word, commonly called *ruling elders*, I shall not say. But, if this argument be good, these must be ambassadors too, as they are presbyters or elders; yea, the conclusion will be as strong, that every ambassador is a presbyter; and even any Indian ambassador to our king, is doing the office of a presbyter, and may be, properly enough, called by that name.

Yet I cannot tell if it will seem good to them who see the force of this argument, that all the words which come from the same root in that language, should be promiscuously applied. As I cannot pretend to be master of the language, I am willing to learn from them on this head: yea, they would oblige me extremely by letting me know further, if I must affix the same idea to the very same word, as oft as I find it in the Greek testament. Take but one instance: The famous word *ὑποστασις* occurs only five times; and in our translation, it is thrice taken to signify *confidence*, 2 Cor. ix. 4. and xi. 17. Heb. iii. 14. Once it is rendered *substance*, Heb. xi. 1. and once *person*, Heb. i. 3. Possibly I might affix one idea to this word, that should answer to all the texts where it is found; but do you think they would allow me to

the apostles on this head, should consider that Paul sets himself before the Ephesian presbyters or bishops, as an example to them in this very thing, when he says, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or "apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered "unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the "weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," Acts xx. 33. 34. 35.

deal

deal thus with the word *ἡλικίαι*? Scapula I suppose understood the Greek language, and he thought it no blunder to distinguish the derivatives of *πρεσβυς*, *legatus*, from the derivatives of *πρεσβυς*, *senex*.

But though we should not admit this distinction, we can make no more of the matter than this, viz. The word *elder* in the Greek comes from a root that signifies an old man, because the elder's office is proper for one of age and experience; and *ambassador* belongs to the same root, because that office requires age and experience. And must we infer from this, that the exercise of the elder's office is the exercise of the office of an ambassador, or that elders are all ambassadors? Then we shall next say, because a ram pushes with his horns, and so doth a bull, therefore a ram is a bull.

They proceed in the same way of reasoning, and observe, "That, in the two places where the apostle speaks of his ambassadorship, 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. 20. and Eph. vi. 19. 20. he takes that title to himself, as a preacher of the gospel, beseeching men to be reconciled to God, and making known the mystery of the gospel. Now, this is not a thing peculiar to the apostles, but common to them with all elders, or bishops, who are labourers in the word and doctrine; and therefore so must the title *ambassador* also be, which is connected with the preaching of the gospel in all the texts where it is used. Yea, when the apostle Peter calls himself *also an elder*, it is supposable, that the apostles were called ambassadors, as they were elders labouring in the word and doctrine: and as ordinary ministers of the word succeed them in that ministry, so do they likewise in their ambassadorship, which they exercised as ministers of the word."

By this argument those presbyters who are not at all ministers of the word, are excluded from succeeding to the title *ambassador*: but if the absurdity of ruling the church without the word *, and the necessity of holding fast by the two orders of church-officers against Prelacy †, should move any of our Presbyterians to say, that these ruling elders must, in some sense, be *apt to teach*, as every elder should ‡; and so

* Matth. xxviii. 20. 1 Pet. v. 1. 2. 3. with Jer. iii. 15. Acts xx. 28.—32.

† Acts vi. 2. 4. Rom. xii. 6. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 10. 11. Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 1.—13.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 5. 9.

be ministers of the word in their own way: then certainly they must be ambassadors likewise, as being successors of the apostles, who were elders, and that in some branch of the ministry of the word, which they exercised as elders.

But the whole argument goes upon this supposition, that the preaching of an apostle and that of a presbyter are the same, or that no such difference can be condescended on betwixt an apostle's ministering the word and a presbyter's ministering it, as should make the title *ambassador* applicable to the one, and not to the other. And yet there is no great difficulty in pointing out such a difference.

Though the notion of an ambassador from God to us, cannot appear at all to be proper, while we are only thinking of the infinite disproportion and of our baseness before him as sinners; yet it answers well enough to the infinite condescension that we behold in the Son of God, his *taking part with us in flesh and blood, and bearing our sins in his own body on the tree*: for he is pursuing this same astonishing condescension toward us, when he sends ambassadors of peace, beseeching us, by this, to be reconciled to him; and as this is amazing, so must our wickedness appear to be in refusing this message. The apostles kept this divine condescension in view when they acted as God's ambassadors, and acted accordingly: for they did not imagine that their honourable office, as ambassadors, gave them any thing of that superiority over those to whom they were ambassadors, which their pretended successors have drawn out of it. They kept by the notion of an ambassador when they applied it to themselves. But we must point out the foresaid difference, so as to make it appear that uninspired elders or bishops, preach as they will, do not succeed the apostles in preaching as ambassadors.

The apostles were sent as the chosen witnesses of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, which they testified in their preachings, Acts x. 40. 41. 42. and xxvi. 16. with 1 Cor. xv. 8. 9.

They were immediately commissioned and inspired with the Holy Ghost, to declare the import of Christ's resurrection, whereof they were witnesses, and to reveal the whole counsel of God concerning that eternal life which was manifested to them, and which they saw in Jesus Christ, when they saw him alive *from the dead*, 1 John i. 1. 2. 3. Acts v. 20.

They were sent to declare this whole counsel of God, as the true sense and hid meaning, or mystery (Rom. xvi. 25. 26. with Eph. vi. 19.) of the Old Testament, under the in-
fallible

fallible conduct of the same Spirit wherewith the prophets had been inspired, 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. Acts xxvi. 22. 23. and x. 43. 44. 2 Pet. i. 20. 21.

And this, together with the signs and wonders, and divers miracles which they had power to work in the name of Jesus, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost wherewith they were endued, and which were bestowed on men by the laying on of their hands, did instruct their mission, and shewed them to be faithful to the trust committed to them, Heb. ii. 1. 2. 3. 4. So that the belief of their preaching, as the testimony of God, is required of men under the pain of eternal death; and whosoever disbelieves it, makes God a liar, because he believes not the testimony of God which they declared, Mark xvi. 15. 16. John xx. 21. 22. 23. 1 John v. 10.—13.

Their testimony concerning Christ's resurrection, and declaration of the import of it, was the preaching of peace and reconciliation with God by Jesus Christ (Acts x. 36.), delivered for the offences of sinners of all nations, and raised again for their justification; and men are reconciled to God, in believing their testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Son of God from the dead, which is the testimony of God, Rom. iv. 24. 25. Chap. v. 1. and Chap. x. 8. 9. 13. 14. 15. 1 Thess. ii. 13.

God condescended infinitely to the rebellious world, in sending the apostles and inspired ministers of the gospel to them with a message of peace from him. He gave them the ministry of reconciliation, empowering them so to propose his peace, with all the articles of it, to the world, as if he himself were doing it; and so the apostle says, *God hath given to us (or committed unto us, or put in us) the word of reconciliation.—Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* Thus the apostles and inspired ministers of the gospel preached the word of reconciliation as God's ambassadors of peace; and this was their preaching that we have written to us in the New Testament.

Now, such is not the preaching of ordinary ministers of the word, who come with no new revelation, nor immediate commission; but, according to the rules laid down by the apostles, (1 Tim. iii. Tit. i.), they are appointed to instruct, exhort, and guide us by the revelation of the word of God's peace, which is fully made already by the apostles his ambassadors; and this, without any power to add any thing to the

the message of the apostles, or to take any thing from it, or any way to alter it, Gal. i. 6. 7. 8. Rev. xxii. 18. 19. And God doth not oblige us to hold every thing they say concerning reconciliation with him in their sermons, as his word, or to believe that he is speaking to us all that they speak, and is beseeching us to all that they require of us : for their interpretations of the preaching of the apostles are not infallible, as are the apostolic interpretations of the prophets. Their interpretations must be tried by the word of the apostles and prophets in the scriptures, and rejected as far as they are not according to that ; but if they be founded in these scriptures, they are to be received as God's word which he sent by his ambassadors, the apostles, 1 John iv. 6. Acts xx. 28.—32.

One would think, that a man who believes the scriptures, or believes on Christ, through the word of his apostles (John xvii. 20.), needs not be told all this, needs not be informed of any such difference betwixt the preaching of the apostles and the preaching of ordinary ministers of the word, as should warrant the calling of the one ambassadors, in distinction from the other ; yet it is fact, that some still plead there is no such difference, " because the apostles proved " the truth of what they said in their preachings by the " scriptures of the Old Testament, and the Bereans are " commended for searching the scriptures daily, whether " these things were so." And they might add, that our Lord himself (who told the Jews, that if they believed not him to be the Christ, they should die in their sins) also bade them search the scriptures, which testified of him.

But, at this rate of arguing and inferring the identity of apostles and elders, I might affirm to you, that any private Christian, who instructs or exhorts another by the scripture, or who gives his ignorant neighbour any information of the way of peace with God through Christ, revealed in the scriptures, and exhorts him accordingly, is God's ambassador, and may be so called, as well as the apostles : for if his instruction and exhortation be according to the scripture, which is the word of God, his neighbour is bound to receive it as God's word, from him who is doing his duty as God commands him in his word.

Our presbyters, I fear, will grudge this application of the title *ambassador* to the private Christian ; and yet the difference betwixt the elders and the brethren, or the *elder* and

and the *younger* *, cannot appear to be so great, even in this matter, as that betwixt the apostles and elders; unless it could be proved, that the apostles were not sent and impowered to explain the Old Testament infallibly, or that elders are infallible interpreters of the scriptures.

All this serves to let us see too manifestly, that our presbyters want to have their sermons of the same account with the preachings of the apostles; yea, I may say, of greater: for while we must receive their explication of the scriptures as the word of God, just as we receive the apostolic explication of the Old Testament, the apostles only explained the Old Testament, but they explain both Old and New.

And as to the mission of apostles to preach that *word of faith*, which whosoever believes shall be saved, they plainly take it to themselves, when they would have us to understand their preaching and their mission to be meant by the apostle, Rom. x. where he says, "The word is nigh thee:—that is the word of faith which we preach. — For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

It cannot be denied by Christians, that this is true with respect to the preaching and mission of the apostles. God revealed unto them by his Spirit the deep things of his wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew, and which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had they entered into the heart of man; and he sent them to teach these things, not in the words of the teaching of

* 1 Pet. v. 5. "Likewise ye younger (*νεώτεροι*), submit yourselves unto the elder (*πρεσβύτεροις*): yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." From this text we may have a true view of the comely order that God hath appointed in his churches.

man's wisdom, but in the words of the Holy Ghost's teaching (1 Cor. ii.); so that it might well be said with respect to their preaching, "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" For the word of salvation, through Christ raised from the dead, was only to be learned at first from their mouth to whom God revealed it, sending them to tell it as good news to the world.

But after they published the *glad tidings* by word of mouth, they also wrote the things they taught, as they say, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name," John xx. 31. It must be owned, therefore, that those have heard the word of salvation through Christ, who hear them preach in their writings, and that they who have their writings are not destitute of the mean of believing on the Son of God, unto life eternal. Yea, they have a ready answer to those questions coming from any set of uninspired teachers, with respect to their own sermons and mission, "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?"

They can tell them, "We hear of him from his apostles, whom he chused and sent to publish the good news of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things; for they have written to us the things they preached, that we might believe and be saved, in believing what they still preach to us in their writings. And as they tell us of pastors and teachers, elders or bishops, whom they characterise to us, beseeching us to suffer the word of exhortation, because they have written in few words, (Heb. xiii. 22.); so if we shall understand you to be these ministers of the word, by the characters they have given, and specially by this, that you hold fast, in your teaching, that word of faith which they preached (without adding thereto any thing, or taking from it), so as to be able, by that very doctrine of theirs, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers, then we are willing to hear you, and ought to pay you all the regard that the apostles require of us toward you, and because they require it. But if you come to us preaching up any other rule or standard of faith, beside that very word of faith which the apostles
" preached

“ preached and have written for us ; and if you tell us, at
 “ the same time, that you are sent to bring us the word
 “ of salvation, and signify to us (as your questions plainly
 “ import), that we cannot call on the name of the Lord
 “ and be saved, because we cannot hear of him, and so
 “ cannot believe on him, without your sermons, then we
 “ must tell you, we have ground to look upon you as
 “ preachers of another gospel, or perverters of the go-
 “ spel of Christ ; and we are bound to hold by the form of
 “ sound words written by the inspired ministers, and hear
 “ them preach to us, without you or any other teachers,
 “ but such as are formed upon the holy scripture, and
 “ are holding fast the apostolic form in their teaching, so
 “ as to be able thereby both to exhort and convince gain-
 “ sayers.”

Jesus Christ sent the apostles as the Father sent him ; but the world called Christian is far from being agreed about the mission of those who would be reckoned sent by him, as the successors of his apostles.

The Roman clergy are very confident the Protestants cannot lawfully preach, as presbyters or bishops, because they have not the true mission, by an uninterrupted succession from the apostles ; and because they are heretics and schismatics from the holy apostolic church of Rome, which has taken away the ordination that any of them may pretend to have had from her, because they departed from the only terms upon which they received it.

Some Protestants again would assure us, the rest cannot preach nor administer the sacraments, for want of the Episcopal ordination, by an uninterrupted succession, through that same Roman church, from which they themselves stand separated and excommunicated.

In our part of the Christian world, the true gospel must be looked for from them, who, being qualified with academical learning, have been tried and ordained by a classical presbytery, without the lord bishop, upon the terms of the *Formula*, which they subscribe.

But some say further, he that is sent must be popular in his preaching, must have the call of the parish, *i. e.* of the majority, not of the heritors and elders, but of the heads of families who keep the parish-kirk, or of the male communicants *, that so he may *come in by the door* † ; and he

* This point is not yet settled among them.

† This is a reference to the very mission of Christ himself.

must stand up for the covenanted work of reformation, if he would be accounted a preacher of the true gospel, and not be looked upon as one that runs unsent.

And some of these justified their mission (when called in question), by this, that they had not departed from any of the terms of their ordination, and by their adherence to the covenanted Presbyterian reformation. This supposes the validity of the mission of the first reformers, who had no other ordination (as it is commonly called), but from the Roman church. And yet it carries a reflection on their mission, because they departed from the terms of their ordination, and had no other ground to stand on but the scriptures.

Now, all these different sects of pretenders to the apostolic mission, have a people ready to believe them, and to say after them, How can we believe to salvation without our sent preachers? and how can those of any other sect preach, seeing they are not sent? But if it were granted to them in the first place, truly to believe that God sent the apostles, and in good earnest to hear their writings, they would soon find a satisfying answer to these their questions.

The apostles have their name from their being sent to preach the word of faith; and why then do not our presbyters call themselves apostles, as well as ambassadors? The argument for the one, is full as strong for the other: for can they not say, "The apostles had that name from their being sent to preach the gospel, the word of salvation: but we are sent to preach the gospel, the word of salvation; therefore we should be called apostles?" This is the proper inference from these questions, whereby they crave the title ambassador: *Are not ministers of the word sent? have they not a commission to preach?* We may therefore be allowed, either not to call them ambassadors, or to call them also apostles. It is true, this is not the name given ordinary pastors and teachers in the New Testament; but neither is the name ambassador. And though the apostles be expressly distinguished from elders by that name, yet if our presbyters had made as free with it as with ambassador, the people would have as little grudged the name, as they do the claim to the very thing intended by it, viz. that same sending to preach the word of salvation, which is spoke of, Rom. x. 14. 15.

The general commission, Matth. xxviii. 19. 20. may be supposed

supposed to include elders, as well as Christ's ambassadors the apostles, from what is said there of baptizing, compared with these words of the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 17. *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.* But these words lead us to think of some peculiar excellency in his mission and preaching of the gospel, beyond that of ordinary baptizers. And the Lord's promise, of his presence to the end of the world, with his ministers and people serving him, is connected with the instructions and commandments which he gave to his apostles, and which remain to this day in their writings, as we may believe they will do to the end of the world.

Perhaps you may wonder that I have insisted so long on this subject, without taking any notice of *the angel of the church*, Rev. i. 20. and ii. 1.; the name about which the diocesan bishop and the classical presbytery have been so long contending. But I am afraid this title suits my subject as little as it does either of those contenders about it: For I may say, with the consent of a learned Episcopalian*, and a no less learned Presbyterian†, that *the angel of the church* is a name borrowed from the ancient synagogue, where he by whose mouth the congregation made their public prayers to God, was called **שליח צבור**, i. e. *The messenger or angel of the congregation.* And it is remarkable, that this business was not so confined to the rulers of the synagogue, but that other members were sometimes employed in it; and whosoever was at any time delegated from the congregation to speak their prayers to God, was the angel of the congregation for that time: for the proper signification of the word used in the Hebrew language for an angel, is a *messenger*; and therefore as a messenger from God to the people is an angel of God, so a messenger from the people to God is an angel of the people. In this latter sense only was the name of *angel* given to that minister in the ancient synagogue. If this be the case, I have nothing to do with it in speaking of ambassadors, or even messengers from God; and as little has the diocesan bishop or classical presbytery to do with the mouth of a single congregation to God in prayer, especially where that is not confined to the rulers.

* Prideaux's connect. part 1. book 6.

† Vitringa de synagoga vetere, lib. 3. par. 2. c. 1. 2. 3.

S E C T. II.

BY this time I suppose you have forgot a very considerable branch of the charge against the letter on the usefulness of catechisms, which was, "That it sets up the faith of devils in opposition to the true saving faith defined in the assembly's catechism."

If you would understand this charge, and see how it is founded, you must look to that paragraph of the letter *, where I commend the New Testament above the catechisms, for a more clear and plain description of the nature of saving faith, and affirm (some think, with great impudence) that one may have a far better notion of that grace from the New Testament itself, than from the assembly's catechism, or the sermons formed upon it.

There I give but a hint of my opinion concerning the nature of faith, as it is pointed out in the New Testament, and there distinguished from all the other graces that flow from it, and are inseparable from it. But now, to prevent any strife about words, and avoid being the author of a definition of faith, I shall give it you in the words of a pretended ambassador, which I find in an account he gives us of the nature of that faith whereby we are united to Christ, and blessed, in distinction from repentance, love, and all the other graces that always attend it †. His words are, "Faith credits the record of God in his word concerning his Son, as true."

He adds more, that, he says, faith does "upon the warrant of God's own word." But, while I agree with this ambassador so far as to the nature of saving faith, I may plead to be excused from adding what he there adds, till he be pleased to distinguish that from repentance, love, and all the other graces always attending it: or, if he mean not tell us the precise nature of faith, but to describe it by its necessary fruits that shew it to be true, when he says, "It approves, it trusts or rests;" I so far agree with him. But here again I would add more, and say, "It works good works." And so I plead, that this should have some place in his description of faith: or, if this cannot be obtained, I must insist, that this definer of faith should point it out in its precise nature, as distinct from all the other graces attending it: and this, be-

* Let. on catech. above, p. 147. 148.

† Mr. William Wilfon's sermons on Psal. lxxii. 17. p. 26. 27. cause

cause the scripture not only describes faith by the fruits of it, and particularly good works; but likewise points out to us the nature of it, in distinction from all other graces; and that I take to be, as my author says, "the crediting of the record of God in his word concerning his Son, as true;" and whatever is produced in us, or done by us through this faith, is done "upon the warrant of God's own word."

From what is said, you may perceive the whole foundation that can be found for this charge against the author of the letter on catechisms. And now I tell you plainly, that when I consider these words, receiving and resting, or coming and embracing, and trusting, as importing more than giving credit to the record of God in his word concerning his Son, I can take them to signify nothing else but love and hope; the love of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the hope of salvation through him; if they do not comprehend the exercise of all the graces of the gospel. But I find the scripture expressly distinguishing *faith* from *love*, and from *hope*, (1 Cor. xiii. 13.), and yet it makes them inseparable; for *faith worketh by love*, Gal. v. 6. and is *the substance of things hoped for*, Heb. xi. 1. And so doth it connect *good works* with *faith*, which are likewise distinguished from it: for *faith without works is dead, being alone*; and, *Seekest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect*, Jam. ii. 17. 20. 22. As I dare not, therefore, separate those things which God hath conjoined in his word, so I am afraid to confound the things that he hath expressly distinguished. For this reason I cannot approve of the definition of faith in the assembly's catechism; and hence came the so much complained of *impudence* in finding fault with it.

And this is the cause (on my part) of its being affirmed with great confidence, "That I am in an error, a great error! a fundamental error! and under strong delusion! that my faith is the faith of devils, and that I am left of God."

These terrible words, you know, have a much greater influence, than any argument or evidence of truth can have, with the mob, which you must suppose to be filled with a mortal hatred of error and delusion, and of the devil, with every thing that is declared by the ambassadors to belong unto him, and ready enough to *persecute and take* any one whom they point out to them as *forfaken of God*.

I remember the mob was once excited to act with fury against

gainst a practice *, which, in other cases, they bear with patience, by its being recommended to their wrath in these words of an ambassador's sermon †, " I am bold to warn
 " you against such an abominable practice; it is, with a
 " witness, a trampling under foot the Son of God, and a
 " counting the blood of the covenant wherewith we ‡ are
 " sanctified, an unholy or common thing."

These words, you see, are taken from the description of the unpardonable sin, in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 26. 29. But however much evil was in that practice, I may be bold to say, it was not the sin against the Holy Ghost: or, if it had been that sin, the hands of the mob would have been easily held, by the ambassador's telling them the words immediately following, which the apostle applies to that case, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord.*—*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 30. 31. And perhaps they would give more heed to him than they do to the apostle speaking in that passage, if he were but as bold to warn them against mobbing (which he cannot justify) by this, that the despisers of Moses's law died by the hands of men to whom it belonged to execute the vengeance; for *they died under two or three witnesses*. But the greatest despisers of the new covenant in Christ's blood, fall into the hands of the living God; who says, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense*, Heb. x. 28.—31. with Rom. xii. 18.—21. If they were allowed to think on this, they might learn a difference betwixt the law of Moses and the new covenant, which they would find of more use to them, and more to their real advantage, than they are willing to believe. But I must not wander from my subject.

I was going to tell you, that I made the definition of faith, which I took from my author, no further mine, than as I took it to refer to the 5th chap. of the 1st epistle of John, from whence the words of it have been at first taken by some body that has been taking an account of faith from the Bible itself; for the assembly's catechism makes no reference to this passage. And I must beg your patience till you have my notion of faith, even that same faith that is

* This was Wrightson's picture shown at Perth.

† See the forecited sermon, p. 64. 65.

‡ Here the scripture-expression is altered.

connected with eternal life, as it is described there in its nature, and by its causes and effects.

1. And now you shall find me describing faith by *receiving*, but receiving a testimony, as the apostle says, ver. 9. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*

Here you see the *receiving*, which is *believing on the Son of God*, cannot be taken in that large sense wherein it stands in the catechism, or in the sermons formed about it, which tell us what it is to receive Christ into our hearts; for *receiving*, in that sense, takes in the exercise of all the graces that may be found in *them that believe on his name*. And they would make it to signify any good disposition of heart toward Christ that you can name, rather than believing or receiving the testimony of God concerning him.

And thus, while they teach us, that we are united to Christ by faith only, and not by the other graces that always attend it; we must at the same time believe them, that we are united to Christ by all the good dispositions that the gospel works in our hearts toward Christ, or by the whole compliance of our hearts with all that the gospel requires of us toward him, in all the ways wherein it exhibits him to us: for this is the meaning of receiving Christ into our hearts, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

I am not therefore ashamed of my confident boasting in the New Testament against the catechism, with the sermons formed upon it: for the apostle commends himself to me exceedingly above his pretended successors, by his plainness and clearness to the meanest capacity, on a subject wherein the most ignorant of mankind have an infinite concern. They know well, by daily practice and experience, from their infancy, what it is to receive the witness of men, or to take man's testimony. From this the apostle leads us into a notion of the faith demanded in the gospel, only by putting God's testimony in place of that of man; and as God is greater than men, so is his testimony, with our receiving it, differenced from theirs. If this may yet possibly be mistaken, he points it out to us by its opposite, which is, *Not believing the testimony that God hath testified of his Son*, and that is *to make him a liar*. To this agree the words of John Baptist, speaking of Christ, John iii. 32. 33. *And what*

he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true. Though it should be granted to our catechisers, that *receiving* stands in their large sense, John i. 12. (*But as many as received him, to them gave he power, or right, to become the sons of God; to them that believe on his name*), no more could be inferred from it, but that they that believe in his name are they that receive him, even as they are they that do his commandments. Yet if they will plead upon the supplement EVEN, and affirm that *receiving* and *believing* are utterly the same thing in this text; then this *receiving* must be the same that is described by the apostle and John Baptist, when they are giving us an account of believing, and not *receiving* in the large sense: for if, in that large sense, it be the very same with believing, then we must say, that sinners are justified and intitled to sonship, by receiving Christ as their king to do his commandments.

II. But let us next attend to the apostle, as he describes faith by that which is believed, and that is, “That Jesus (who came by water and blood) is the Christ, the Son of God; and, That God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.”

The testimony of God that we are called to receive or believe, is concerning Jesus who died on the cross, whose side was pierced by one of the soldiers, after they saw that he was dead already, and *forthwith there came out blood and water*, John xix. 33. 34. 35.

We are to believe concerning this Jesus, *That he is the Christ*, or the Messiah that was promised and prophesied of in the Old Testament, and that all that was said there of that Messiah is verified, and holds true only and fully in him; and especially, *That he is the Son of God*, described by this same apostle in the first chapter of the gospel written by him, where the Son of God is called *the Word*, (as he is likewise in this passage), and declared to be the eternal God by whom all things were created, John i. 1. 2. 3. 14. 15. 33. 34.

“And this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” This *giving* is more largely expressed by the apostle in this same epistle, chap. iv. 9. 10. where he says, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his on-

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“ly begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son, the propitiation for our sins.” Compare Gal. iv. 4. 5. 6. and Rom. iii. 21.—26. He likewise shews us how God hath given us eternal life in his Son, when he tells us, that he, and the rest of the witnesses of his resurrection, saw this eternal life begun in him, when he shewed himself alive to them from the dead, by many infallible proofs, in presence of the disciples that were with them, and made them his witnesses of what they thus saw, (Acts i. 3. 8.). He says, chap. i. 1. 2. 3. “That—which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

This, with what is said chap. ii. ver. 19. may let us see who are meant by US, to whom we must believe that God hath given eternal life, in raising his Son from the dead: or, we may understand it by these words of the prayer made by Jesus Christ in presence of his apostles, John xvii. 9. 20. 21. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world; but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. — Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” This is that company which is pointed out to John in the vision, (Rev. v. 9.), saying to the Lamb, “Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

And thus we may understand who they are that *have the Son*, and therefore *have this life which is in him*. They are those of every nation and sort of men, without difference, who have received or believed this testimony of God concerning him; as we may also see plainly from the 10th and 13th verses of this chapter, “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. — These things have

“ I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.”

We may compare this with what Paul says to the Romans, chap. x. 6.—14. “ Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down: or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead *. — The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart † man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. — For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” This then is that faith whereby we have Christ, with the life from the dead that is in him; even our taking God’s testimony, or believing him, that he hath raised Jesus Christ his Son from the dead; and what else is this but the knowledge and persuasion of this truth by testimony? yea, if it were any thing else, it behoved it to get another name than faith.

III. The apostle speaks of this testimony as it is the ground of this faith, and points it out to us several ways. He says, *There are three that bear record in heaven, where Jesus, the Word, appears gloriously alive from the dead, in the name of all his people, through the merit of his obedience to the death, and thereby declares himself to be the Son of God, in whom there is eternal life for his people; and thereby also the Father, who gave him that life, as the due reward of his obedience to the death, declares the same thing; as does likewise the Holy Ghost, by whose power he was raised from the dead, and is glorified in heaven as the head of his body the church.*

* Say not in thine heart any thing that may import, that the Son of God came not down from heaven to fulfil the law for sinners of all nations; or, that he lies yet under death, as if he had not fulfilled the law, nor given complete satisfaction to the offended Majesty of God, for the sins of his people in his death: for this is the import of the way of thinking, that moves men to go about to establish a righteousness of their own; and this way of thinking and speaking is the very opposite of saving faith, and of the confession of it.

† The heart cannot be taken here to stand in distinction from the persuasion of the mind, but from the confession of the mouth.

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The testimony that we believe is expressly called the testimony of God the Father concerning his Son; and in his testifying, he has two other witnesses concurring with him; *the Word*, or the Son himself, who declares his Father's name unto his brethren, Heb. ii. 12. John xvii. 26. For as none knoweth the Son but the Father, so none knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Matth. xi. 27. *And the Holy Ghost*, whose work is to testify of the Son, John xv. 26. These two concurred with him in the creation of all things; and without them he never did any work.

And these three are one. The *Word* and the *Holy Ghost*, who bear witness with the *Father* in the divine testimony, are one and the same God with him *; so that we believe these three when we receive the testimony that is greater than that of men, because it is the testimony of God. We look on them as three distinct witnesses, and we look on them as one and the same God, in believing their testimony; and therefore the believers of Christ's resurrection are baptized, (Matth. xxviii. 19.), and blessed, (2 Cor. xiii. 14. with Numb. vi. 23.—27.), in the name of these three.

The testimony of the divine Three who bear record in Heaven, is on earth, in the testimony of the three that bear witness there: for the apostle says, "There are three that bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." And he lays the main stress of this upon the spirit, when he says, "This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. — And it is the spirit that beareth witness †."

The spirit, as it is here distinguished from the *Holy Ghost*, is not to be taken for his person; but it is the word of the truth of the gospel, concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory, which was preached by the apostles, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, 1 Pet. i. 10. 11. 12. And the gospel itself that was preached by the apostles, is here called the spirit, as it is the sense and meaning, the scope and drift of the Old Testament, which we find, in distinction from the gospel, called *the letter*, 2 Cor. chap. iii. and *the flesh*, Gal. iii. 3. The apostle himself may be understood thus to shew us, that it is the truth of

* Deut. vi. 4. *Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.* See letter to a bishop, &c. and Christianity very near as old as the creation.

† *Kai to Pneuma to to p. p. p. p. p.*

the gospel, that he means by the word *spirit*, as he says; *For the spirit is the truth*, or, *For the truth is the spirit**.

The gospel itself beareth witness to us, as it is the spirit, the true sense and scope of the Old Testament: and therefore we find the apostles setting forth Christ as the “end of the law,” in whom “all the promises of God are yea and amen;” and declaring that they said “none other things but what Moses and the prophets did say should come, That Christ should suffer, that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.” And in all their preachings and writings, they still set forth that which they testified, as the sense and drift of the Old Testament. Nothing serves more to convince us that the gospel is the word of God, or to shew us the divine glory shining in it, than when we are made to view it as the spirit of the law of Moses, or of the whole Old Testament: for thus we have the whole strength of the evidence that is carried in the Old-testament revelation, and in the New, before us at once: and therefore nothing could be more proper than the apostle’s calling the gospel *the spirit*, where he speaks of its testimony as the ground of faith.

The apostle taught the first Christians to distinguish the New Testament by the name *spirit*, from the Old Testament, which they taught them to call the *flesh* and the *letter*. And this way of speaking was exceeding significant, as it at once expressed the nature of the difference and the connection betwixt the two, and signified the necessity of the New Testament with respect to the Old, with its great excellency above it. But when their pretended successors (seeking a worldly kingdom to themselves, like that of the Old Testament) thought fit to lay aside the apostolic distinction betwixt the New Testament and the Old; this primitive way of speaking concerning these two covenants, which was very plain to the first Christians, contending against the Jews, became very dark, and turned quite obsolete.

We need not wonder at this, when we find our pretended ambassadors maintaining their kingdom, which is of this world, after the example of the kingdom of Israel, (though it be but a very poor imitation of it), by telling us, we must not call these, *two covenants*, as we see the apostle expressly doing, Gal. chap. iv. and Heb. chap. viii. but *two dispen-*

* “Ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀλήθεια.

sations of one and the self-same covenant. And they teach us, that our nation should make a covenant with God, according to the covenant that God made with the nation of Israel, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, though it be most manifest, that God, by his apostles and prophets, says the quite contrary, Heb. viii. 8.—13. with Jer. xxxi. 31.—34.

But however useless this way of speaking of *letter* and *spirit* has been made in this case, by the doctrine of our divines; yet it is not quite out of use among men in other cases: for I think I have heard our lawyers speaking of *the LETTER of the law, and the SPIRIT of the law.*

Paul shews the excellency of the glory of the New Testament, or of the *spirit*, which is ministered by the apostles of Christ, above the glory of the ministration of the Old Testament, or the *letter*. He tells us the glory of that *letter* was the glory that shined on *the face of Moses*, which the Israelites could not stedfastly behold, and which was to be done away; but the glory of the New Testament, which is the *spirit*, *i. e.* the intent and scope of that *letter*, is the very divine glory that shines in *the face of Jesus Christ*, and from him into the hearts of his apostles, who ministered that *spirit* so plainly, that all believers may by that ministration behold the unvailed glory of the Lord, 2 Cor. chap. iii. and chap. iv.

But that which we are especially to notice here, is, that it is said concerning the first covenant, “Neither was the first dedicated without blood: for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the BLOOD of calves, and of goats, with WATER, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you,” Heb. ix. 18. 19. 20. with Exod. chap. xxiv. And here it is said of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, That he *came by water and blood.*

The not breaking of Christ’s bones, when the bones of the thieves were broken, (John xix. 31. 32. 33.), was a circumstance of his death, that not only shewed him to have been manifestly dead, but pointed forth his death as the truth of the sacrifice of the passover, John xix. 36. with Exod. xii. 46. And John, who takes notice of that, declares this other circumstance of his death, as of no small importance with respect to our faith, That when his side was pierced, according

according to the prophecy, (John xix. 37. with Zech. xii. 10.), "Forthwith there came out blood and water :?" for he says upon it, "And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true : and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe," John xix. 34. 35. For this blood and this water bring to mind the blood and the water at the dedication of the first covenant, and so they point forth Christ's death as the truth of the sacrifices whereby the covenant was confirmed. Thus our Lord, in the institution of his supper, sets forth his death as the confirmation of the new covenant, as he refers to these words of Moses at the dedication of the first, *This is the blood of the testament ; or, Behold the blood of the covenant*, when he says, *This is my blood of the new testament*, or covenant, Matth. xxvi. 28.

Now, this blood and water, answering to the blood and the water of the first covenant, testify and declare, that the death of Christ put an end to that first covenant, and by these God signifies to us, that the new covenant of eternal life from the dead, is now in full force by his death, and firmly established with him that died : for to declare the covenant established with him by blood and water on his dead body, was plainly to shew that this covenant was to give him life from the dead. And, as this life could not take place but by his fulfilling and abolishing the first covenant in his death, it is hereby signified that this life is in him ; so that *whosoever hath him hath life, and whosoever hath not him hath not life*.

The *blood* is the sign, or symbol, or emblem of the atoning meriting virtue of his obedience to the death ; and the *water* is the sign of the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost, John vii. 38. 39. through which also he had offered up himself without spot, Heb. ix. 14. By virtue of this blood he was brought again from the dead, Heb. xiii. 20. and so declared to be the Son of God, who, *as he had power to lay down his life, had power to take it again*, by his own infinite merit. And he was raised again from the dead by the efficacy of this *living water*, that *springs up unto everlasting life*. And by this blood and this water of the new covenant, all his people are made sharers with him in the eternal life to which he was raised, Rom. viii. 10. 11.

The apostle says, *He came not in water only, but in water and blood*. When he came in the flesh, being made of a woman, made under the law, and was about to enter on the exercise of his office, as a minister of the circumcision, (Rom.

(Rom. xv. 8.), he came in water, at the baptism of John, where he appeared as the Son of God undertaking to fulfil all the righteousness of the law for his people; and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, and the Spirit of God descended under the emblem of a dove, and remained on him; so that John saw and bare record, *That this is the Son of God*, Matth. iii. 13.—17. John i. 31.—34. But this is not all that serves to shew him to be the Son of God; neither did the life from the dead yet appear in him by the baptism of John, as it did by the baptism (Luke xii. 50.) with water and blood: for when he came again from the dead into his kingdom, or when he came in the new covenant, he came *not in water only*, as he did under the law, *but in water and blood*. In the water that came out of his pierced side, importing the life-giving efficacy of the Spirit of God, which shewed itself in the raising of him from the dead unto eternal life. And this could not be without the *blood* that came with it, importing his own infinite merit, the merit of his atoning sacrifice, which shewed itself in his resurrection from the dead: for he was *brought again from the dead in the blood of the everlasting covenant*, wherein God calls not iniquity again to remembrance, by requiring any more sacrifice for sin, Heb. x. 3. 11. 12. 14.—18.

And thus the *water* and the *blood* concur with the word of faith which the apostles preached, the *spirit* or sense of the Old Testament, in testifying to us, that we may believe, *that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life*. And in believing this, that is thus testified to us by the three witnessing in earth, agreeing in one with the testimony of the three witnessing in heaven, we set to our seal, that God is true.

IV. The apostle declares that this faith is the effect of our being born of God: for he says, ver. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*. And however easy they may imagine this to be, who are not exercised in examining themselves as to their belief of the truth of the gospel, nor studying to behold the evidence of its truth, but take it as a tradition from their fathers; yet it must be owned by them who would not deny the scriptures, that there is such a belief, that cannot be without the new birth. However wicked men, or

their father the devil may believe, we are assured here, there is a belief of the truth, which is the effect of being born again. And this belief that is peculiar to the children of God, as they are begotten of him, must be of a different nature from any belief that is to be found in the children of the devil, however much the one may resemble the other. They who are enlightened, and receive the word with joy, so as to join the children of God in the confession of the faith, and yet draw back to perdition, have not that same knowledge of the truth, nor that persuasion of it upon its proper evidence, that the children of God have, who believe to the saving of the soul: therefore the faith of *them who believe to the saving of the soul*, is called, *the evidence of things not seen*, in distinction from those who *draw back to perdition*, Heb. x. 39. and xi. 1.

This birth, whereof faith is the effect, *is not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, (John i. 12. 13.), who, *of his own will, begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures* (James i. 18.), *being born again not of corruptible seed*, (as Israel, the children of God according to the flesh, whose birth, though it was by virtue of God's promise to Abraham their father, yet was of corruptible seed), *but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. i. 23. Thus our Lord points out this spiritual birth to Nicodemus, and distinguishes it from the fleshly, wherein the Jews gloried, John iii. 3. 5. 6. 8. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.---Except a man be born of water and spirit* (ll. xlv. 3. 4.), *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.---The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh:---so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

The faith of God's testimony concerning his Son, whereby we see the kingdom of God, and enter into it, is not, therefore, *of ourselves*; *it is the gift of God*, who gave his Son, and gave us eternal life in him, when he raised him from the dead, Eph. ii. 4.—8. And it is *given us in the behalf of Christ*, Phil. i. 19. and for his merit, that brought him again from the dead; for we obtain it *through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 1. as it is also wrought in us (by means of the gospel) by the power

power of the Spirit of God, which wrought in the raising of him from the dead, Eph. i. 19. 20. Col. ii. 12.

V. The apostle shews us, that this belief of the truth, which proceeds from the new birth, distinguishes itself by its peculiar fruits and effects, as we see from ver. 1. to 5. And these are, first, *love to God*, and to the *children of God*, who *know the truth*, and that *for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them*, 2 John ver. 2. This again must be evidenced in *keeping the commandments of God*, or doing the good works that he requires, specially the works of love one to another, even as Christ loved us, according to his new commandment: for hereby the children of God are distinguished from the children of the devil. And when we *love, not in word nor in tongue, but in deed, or work, and in truth*, then we *know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him*, 1 John iii. 10. 18. 19. And whereas the works of this peculiar love that are commanded by God, make the practisers of them the objects of the hatred of the men of this world (John xv. 17. 18. with 1 John iii. 13.), and the love of this world prevailing in us, will make these commands grievous to us, and the lusts of this world struggle so in our hearts against the doing of the works of the peculiar love God requires, that we can do them no further than these are overcome; the apostle says, that this faith overcomes the world, so as to make his commandments *not grievous* to us. His words are, *His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood.* The faith that overcomes the world, looks on him that was pierced, as he came from the dead by water and blood, having put an end to the covenant of temporal life in Canaan's land, and ratified the new covenant * of eternal life from the dead, or having done away the testament of the worldly inheritance, and confirmed the testament † of the eternal heavenly inheritance, whereof he himself, the first begotten of the dead, is the heir, and all his people, of every nation, joint heirs with him. And this has a most manifest

* It has the notion of a covenant, as it has a mediator, and is ratified by sacrifice.

† And the inheritance of children, with the confirmation by the testator's death, give it the notion of a testament.

tendency to wean our hearts from this world, and to give us the victory over it, Col. iii. 1.—5. This testimony that we believe concerning the eternal life that God hath given us in his Son, whom he raised from the dead, must likewise influence us, in believing it, to love God, and to love one another, and do the works of love that he requires toward them with whom we look for a share of this life in his Son, that he hath given us ; as we may see from this whole epistle of John.

And indeed we hold this truth in believing it, as we do the principles that guide our inclinations, even the principles of our practice : for all our choice is directed, all our practice influenced, by some persuasion ; and therefore the scripture speaks of *living in error*, 2 Pet. ii. 18. and of *walking in darkness*, 1 John i. 6. For though we *know that they who commit such things are worthy of death*, yet another principle leads our practice, when we *not only do the same, but consent with them that do them*, Rom. i. 32. And on the other hand, when the truth of the gospel becomes the principle of our practice, as it does when we really believe it, we are said to *do the truth*, John iii. 21. *to walk in truth*, 2 John ver. 4. and *in the light*, 1 John i. 7. And thus whatsoever the scripture ascribes to believing, is ascribed, at bottom, to the truth, or to that which is believed, and which is, at the same time, the cause of faith ; and all the power that believers have to will or to do good, is the power of the word which they believe, *which bringeth forth fruit in them*, Col. i. 6. and is *able to save their souls*, as it is *grafted in them*, James i. 21. Yea, and I would have our catechisers especially to notice, that we shall not so easily place a merit of our own in our believing the testimony concerning the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ for justification, as we can think of our own merit in believing, when we conceive that *believing* to be the good dispositions and inclinations of our hearts toward him, as exhibited in the gospel ; even while, as to these good hearts of ours, we may be saying, *I thank thee I am not as other men*.

The belief of Christ's righteousness, as it is revealed in the gospel, conforms us to his obedience to the death, especially in love to the brethren whom we have seen ; and this is ever attended with that love and good-will to all men, even our enemies that hate us, and persecute us for the truth, which he requires of us, and hath taught us by his example. But this fruit of the gospel must not be looked

ed on as the same thing with natural affection, friendship, and the love of our species, or of the human kind, and the love of one's country : for this love to all men, even the enemies of the gospel, doing them good for evil, blessing them and praying for them, which is the proper fruit of faith, and accompanies brotherly love, is for the sake of the unknown elect, 2 Tim. ii. 10. Tit. iii. 2. 3. even as God is good to the evil and unthankful world for their sakes, as Peter tells, 2 Pet. iii. 9. *He is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Thus our Lord prayed for his enemies that were spitefully using him in putting him to death ; but he was praying for them that the Father had given him, and his prayer was effectual upon the *remnant according to the election of grace*, that was saved from among the Jews by the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and afterward. Stephen imitated his Lord in praying for his spiteful persecutors at his death, and the Lord answered his prayer in the conversion of Saul, who says, *I did it ignorantly and in unbelief*, 1 Tim. i. 13. And when our Lord prayed for forgiveness to his enemies, he said, *For they know not what they do.* So that if any of them that acted spitefully against Christ, in putting him to death, had been first illuminated in the knowledge of him, they would have had no interest in this prayer ; even as Paul signifies, that if he had persecuted the church, and blasphemed as he did, after illumination, he had not obtained mercy. The gospel declares, *that the world lies in wickedness*, except them that believe, and yet commands us to pray for them that lie in wickedness : but the sin unto death excludes men from that love to all men and to enemies, that is the fruit of faith ; for it crosses the very end and design of the gospel-benevolence, which is for the sake of the unknown elect, for whom Christ died ; because by this sin men appear to be reprobates : therefore the apostle says, *There is a sin unto death, I do say that he shall pray for it ;* yea, Paul seems to give us an instance of a prayer against it, 2 Tim. iv. 14. Thus we may see how the love that the gospel requires toward all men, and even the enemies of the gospel, is connected with that brotherly love that is the great fruit and evidence of faith. And if you take this hint, you will know how to improve it when you happen to hear any of our fine declaimers on charity.

Now, by these necessary fruits of the belief of the truth
that

that the apostle mentions, even love to God and the children of God, and the good works that he requires done in the way of overcoming the world, we know that we do indeed believe the testimony of God concerning his Son, and so *have the Son*; and thus we *know that we have eternal life*, according to the testimony that says, *He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* Compare John iii. 36.

S E C T. III.

IF your patience be not quite spent on this long lecture, you must bear with me a little further, till you have my account of the faith of devils.

By the charge against the letter on this head, I am referred to the epistle of James, chap. ii. ver. 19. 20. where he says, "Thou believest that there is one God *; thou dost well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou not know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Now, I cannot find that James distinguishes the faith of God's elect here from that of devils, by placing the nature of it in any thing beside the belief of the truth of the gospel; but it is easy to perceive that he would have us to shew our belief of the truth to be of a different nature from their belief, by the fruits of it, good works. He doth not say any thing from which we can possibly infer, that there must be more in faith than the belief of the truth of the gospel; but he teaches us, that the true saving belief of the gospel, in the souls of men that are born of God (Jam. i. 18. 21.), must be very different from the devils belief; because it produces good works, fruits of a very different nature from the fruit of the devils faith; and he would have the root distinguished by the fruits, as he says, "I will shew thee my faith by my works." He speaks more particularly of the works whereby he distinguishes true faith from false, where he bids us be *doers of the word*, and forbids us to let our zeal in words and professions outrun our practice in religion. He says there, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to

* Compare 1 John v. 7. *These three are one.*

“ keep himself unspotted from the world,” Jam. i. 21. 22. — 27. Here are fruits very different from what the devils faith produces; and if our zeal in this pure and undefiled religion hold pace with our zeal in words and professions, we need not be much afraid of the faith of devils.

That terror and dreadful horror which James places as the effect of the devils believing, when he says, they *believe and tremble*, is very opposite to that love whereby faith worketh in bringing forth good works; as John tells us, when he says, “ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: he that feareth, is not made perfect in love,” 1 John iv. 18. And I need not tell you that this tormenting fear is very different from that *godly fear*, without which there can be no obedience, and from the “ fear of our coming short of the promised rest through unbelief;” since you see it is opposite to love and good works, and therefore to saving faith. We see one of the children of the devil *trembling* with this tormenting fear at the preaching of an apostle his prisoner, and putting the word away from him, Acts xxiv. 24.—27. And we find the slothful servant giving this as the reason of his neglecting the improvement of his talent, “ I feared thee,” “ because thou art an austere man,” Luke xix. 20. 21. But some of them are said to *receive the word with joy*, Matth. xiii. 20; yet this their joy (however they be *enlightened, and taste the good word of God*) cannot be that *rejoicing in the truth*, which is the property of charity or love; it must be a joy belonging to the love of one’s self, aside from God and his children, in whom the truth dwells: for these tasters of the good word of God bring not forth the fruits of the word, the works of love. Compare Heb. vi. 4.—11. with Matth. xiii. 20. 21. And thus, I think, we may set aside all that belief of the gospel, from the true saving belief of it, that doth not produce love and good works, however men or devils be affected with it. What shall we then say of their belief of the gospel, who neither rejoice nor tremble at it, let be to do its works?

The coming of the man of sin, or of Antichrist, after the working of Satan, is declared to be the righteous judgment of God upon the professors of the truth of the gospel, who received not the love of that truth: for the apostle speaking of that great apostasy from the gospel, under a form of the profession of it, says, “ because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and
“ for

“ for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they
 “ should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who
 “ believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteous-
 “ nefs,” 2 Theff. ii. 9.—12. The *love of the truth*, which
 you see here inseparably connected with the true belief of
 that truth, and separated from the false, did, from the be-
 ginning, shew itself in patient joyful suffering for the truth,
 (Heb. x. 32.—35. 1 Theff. ii. 13. 14. 2 Theff. i. 4. 5.), and
 in the zeal of good works and almsdeeds, denying the lust
 of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,
 2 Cor. viii. 1.—8. 1 John ii. 15.—19. But when men
 began to profess the truth, grudging the cross, and became
 cool in the zeal of good works, through the love of this
 world prevailing in them, this brought the *strong delusion*
 upon them *that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in*
unrighteousness.

And the end of it was, “ That they should believe a lie,
 “ that they might be damned:” That they should believe
 that they may follow Christ without the cross, and not that
 only, but even persecuting others; that the friendship of
 this world is not enmity with God, and that they can serve
 God and Mammon, and obtain the glory of our Lord Je-
 sus Christ in seeking the glory of this world: for, if the
 gospel be true, this is a damnable lie. And it is fact, that
 the belief of this lie has been wrought in multitudes of men
 called Christians, and is a judgment exceeding well suited
 to the cause for which it came.

The opposite of this is, “ the sanctification of the Spirit,
 “ and belief of the truth,” through which God’s elect are
 saved, 2 Theff. ii. 13. 14. For they who received not the
 love of the truth, or who had pleasure in unrighteousness,
 however they professed the truth, yet believed it not; because
 the true saving belief of the gospel is inseparable from the
 sanctification of the Spirit.

And the mean of preservation from this strong delusion,
 is, *standing fast, and holding the traditions* of the apostles that
 were not yet all written in the epistle to the Thessalonians,
 but are now fully written in the New-testament scriptures,
 where they are only to be found pure and entire; and by
 these the Lord establishes his own people *in every good word*
and work: yet some pretended successors of the apostles
 would have us believe it is *strong delusion* that makes men
 contend for the necessary connection betwixt the *sanctifica-*
tion of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, as it appeared

in the church of the Thessalonians; and they would have those men reckoned deluded believers of a lie, who pretend to hold fast the traditions of the apostles written in the New Testament, without a national confession of faith, or without the catechism, which they call the mean of enlightening the land with the light of the gospel.

But I proceed to give you some notes from the history of the faith of devils.

And, first, I find, after that notable manifestation of Jesus his being the Son of God at John's baptism, the devil, who could not be ignorant of it, came to him, moving a question about the truth that had been manifested, desiring him to prove it by evidence inferior to that which he had already, and using scripture to induce him to manifest it in an unscriptural manner; and when he failed in that attempt, he dropt the question, and offered him the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them; which was most conspicuous at that time in the Roman empire, if he would hold them of him, the *prince of this world*, and the *god of this world*, and worship him. This offer our Lord rejected, with the abominable condition, Matth. iii. 15. 16. 17. and chap. iv. 1.—10. Some ages after this, the clergy came to be set over that empire; but by what tenor they held it, and upon what condition they keep the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, will not be so easily understood.

From the time of Satan's making this attack upon Jesus, we may suppose the devils knew him to be the Christ, the Son of God, that was promised in the Old Testament; and they understood his authority and power, as "the Son of God manifested to destroy the works of the devil," by the works he wrought, and especially his casting them out of those that were possessed; and they confessed it with *trembling*; as we find them crying out, "What have we to do with thee Jesus thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matth. viii. 29. Mark v. 7. Luke viii. 28. Thus they believed, and trembled. But whatever way they acted, or stirred up men to act, with respect to the truth, their design was still devilish; for we cannot expect to find in these desperately proud, spiteful, and crafty spirits, that belief of the truth which works by self-denied unfeigned love.

The multitude that was like to take Jesus by force to make him a king, from whom he fled (John vi. 14. 15.); the

multitude that followed him for the loaves (ver. 26. 27.), hoping to make a fine life of him in this world, as their fathers lived when God was bringing them to their kingdom in Canaan (ver. 31.), shewed a great zeal for him; but they were set on by the devil, the prince of this world. When Christ's doctrine drove them away, and the disciples, who found themselves disappointed in their worldly hopes, had left him (ver. 66.), he inquired at the twelve, whom he knew to be a little tainted with that devilish prejudice of a *worldly kingdom* to the Messiah, *Will ye also go away?* and they answered him, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Then he tells them, *One of you is a devil*. This was Judas Iscariot, who, at bottom, preferred this life to the *words of eternal life*; and therefore at last betrayed him, when he was no longer able to reconcile the following of Christ with his worldly hope, John vi. 67.—71. When Peter confessed the faith, the Lord sustained his confession, and pronounced him blessed, as a child of God that had been taught of the Father, Matth. xvi. 16. 17. But when this same Peter discovered his thoughts of a worldly kingdom to Christ, and shewed his affection to him on that footing, he called him Satan, and rejected with disdain the zeal he shewed for him, as being inconsistent with his faith, and as opposite to it as Satan is to God, ver. 21. 22. 23.

From all this we may justly suspect that confession of the faith of Christ the Son of God, that is entwisted with men's worldly interests, and has not a connection with the cross*; for this must be a distinguishing effect of the belief of the truth of the gospel, that Christ taught Peter with a severe rebuke, viz. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matth. xvi. 24.—27.

If Jesus had come to the nation of the Jews in the power of an earthly monarch, it is probable they had owned him with great zeal, and readiness to knock down all his opposers; but seeing he came in the very opposite manner, they

* These three Greek letters χ , ξ , ς , which express the number of the beast's name, Rev. xiii. 17. 18. happen to be the initials of this motto for all his company, $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \xi\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \varsigma\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, and the opposite number of the Lamb stands in these three letters ϵ , μ , δ , Rev. vii. 4. $\rho\eta\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma \mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\upsilon\varsigma \delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha\iota$.

were easily instigated by the devil to oppose him ; and they shewed themselves to be the children of the devil (notwithstanding their high pretensions to be the children of God, and his people), by persecuting him to the death, for calling himself the Christ, the Son of God, John viii. 39. to 44. But behold, at the same time, the unclean spirits confessing him to be the Christ the Son of God ! “ I know thee “ who thou art, the holy one of God,” says one of them, Mark i. 24. Luke iv. 34. “ And they fell down before him, “ and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God,” Mark iii. 11. Yet Jesus would have no confession, no testimony from that quarter ; he commanded them to hold their peace, and charged them that they should not make him known. He suffered them not to speak, because they knew him, Mark i. 34. And indeed whether men took him for the Christ upon their testimony, or rejected him because they testified of him, their point was gained in both events.

After this, the devil, who stirred up persecution every where against the apostles, offered his testimony to the way of salvation preached by them, and to them as the declarers of it ; and urged it upon them, saying, *These are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.* The apostles, in like manner, rejected this testimony, and they paid for it ; for they were beaten and imprisoned as troublers of the world, and disturbers of the peace, at the instigation of those who made gain by the devil's prophets, Acts xvi. 16.—24.

Neither you nor I question, that the philosophical opposition which Arius (the product of the first Christian school of learning) made unto the doctrine of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ did proceed from the devil ; but perhaps you never dreamed that he had any hand in the Nicene confession of the faith : for as the majority of the bishops of that grand synod, and the emperor by whom it was called, held the right side of the question, in opposition to Arius, what know I but you may have had that much confidence to put in the devil, as to think he would not speak inconsistently with himself ? But, though he needs not speak contradictions, for want of logic or metaphysics, the facts I have noted down from the scripture-history, serve to shew you he is in no strait about speaking any way ; at least he casts up in so very opposite shapes (driving his point still against Christ) in the gospel-history, that you need not be alarmed, if I call upon you to take a look at

the council of Nice, to see if we can find him even there.

Observe then, in the first place, that, as Arius attacked the truth by philosophy, the fathers of the council opposed to him the fittest words their wisdom could devise, to distinguish it from his error; and these their words stood as the confession and standard of the faith of Christ the Son of God. Thus the deep things of God came to be confessed, not in the words which the Holy Ghost taught, but in the words of the wisdom of the disputer of this world, now established as the standard of the truth of the gospel. You will see little in this; for if the truth at bottom be owned, you are easy about the words. But I cannot so easily pass over this; for those words wherein the truth was now set forth to be believed and confessed, carried another authority in them, than that upon which the truth was at first received in the *form of sound words* set by the inspired apostles; and this was the authority of the catholic council. And from this time the *form of sound words* that was dictated by the Holy Ghost, became of less consideration in the confession of the faith, as less fit to distinguish a true profession from a false, than the forms that men have been framing and imposing ever since that famous beginning in the council of Nice. All heretics own the scriptures, and plead them, it is true; but still the scripture alone must determine to me, who is a heretic, and who not. Here I shall leave to your consideration three queries, that I find in a twopenny pamphlet written against the infallibility of the church of Rome, intitled, *The plain man's reply to the catholic missionaries*, printed in the year 1686; and I would even catechise our catechisers with these same queries; which are,

1. "Suppose a controversy should arise about the canons of any council, how, and in what sense they are to be understood? Can such decrees determine themselves, and explain their own meaning? If so, then,
2. "Why must not the same privilege be granted to the holy scriptures? Why cannot the writings of God judge and determine controversies, as well as the writings of men?
3. "Whether cannot the Spirit of God, by which the scriptures were indited, express his mind as plainly and intelligibly, as the fathers of any council?"

And you may likewise consider what Dr Owen says in his *Theologumena*, *Digress. de philosophiæ cum theologia mixtura*,

mistura, p. 509. though he too composed a catechism.

But let us behold next the confession of the faith of the Son of God, set at the top of the Roman empire, and connected with the power and glory thereof. What you will think of this, I know not; but I suppose this would have pleased Peter, when he was saying that for which his master called him Satan. The multitude, and the disciples that went back, and Judas who was called a devil, would have been delighted with this; yea, the Jewish rulers themselves had been far from calling Jesus a blasphemer for his doctrine, if it had been attended with this power and glory.

The cross that Jesus Christ joined inseparably to the true confession of the faith, was set at a great distance from this confession, and the reverse came in its place. It is true, the story tells, that the likeness of the cross appeared in the air to Constantine, with this inscription, *Through this thou shalt overcome*, i. e. through this thou shalt vanquish thy rivals, and become Roman emperor; and so it came to pass. Then the sign of the cross in the Roman banner accompanied the confession of the faith in its exaltation in that empire. Thus I own the cross and the faith were connected: but you may let me say, this was a new way of taking up the cross, together with the new confession and standard of faith.

And now the Christian leaders, who were originally examples to the flock, of humble dependence on the Lord Jesus, and of self-denial in conformity to him, came to have the empire subjected to them, in dependence on the emperor, and distributed among them in subordination to one another. The bishops of each province were dependent on their metropolitan, with a provincial synod; and there were bishops again of capital churches, set over those metropolitans and their provinces, as the bishop of Alexandria over Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis, the bishop of Antioch over the whole east. But there is some difficulty about the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome in the west; for he was not yet come to his supremacy; and the council of Nice did not precisely or clearly enough determine the limits of his jurisdiction. Our clergy have no offence at the subjection of provinces and nations, as a flock to the Christian pastors, in their synods and councils subordinate to one another; but they suspect the subordination of bishops to metropolitans, and of them again to capital bishops, to have proceeded from the devil: For they have all their share

share in the government of the world, by subordination of synods and councils; and though they have no scruple at lording over the people, (but are clear for it to avoid confusion), they are pretty positive, that the subjecting of themselves to the jurisdiction of a superior bishop (to avoid confusion), is a thing that came of the devil, though it be a thing that was done even by the council of Nice. They will not be called *the clergy*; but they can plead 1 Pet. v. 3. against the lordship of the bishop over them, (*Neither as being lords over God's heritage, τῶν κληρῶν, but being ensamples to the flock*), yet they will not allow it to be pleaded against their lordship over the people; but though nothing else that was done by the council of Nice should please our clergymen, they are well satisfied that the making of that creed or confession of the faith of the Son of God for the empire, was a great and a good thing; for therein they see the name of the Son of God exalted.

Yet I cannot tell what they will think of this when they consider it, *viz.* That the name of Christ, by this exaltation, and the faith of him, as thus dignified, was dependent on the power that ruled the Roman empire, and held this its station much at the will of the emperor, who sometimes inclined to the Nicene faith, and sometimes to Arianism, till he was taken out of the way, and the kings, who divided the empire, gave their power to the clergy. And this did not mend the matter: for when the clergy came thus to be the head, they were ruled immediately by the devil, as our reformers thought, and as some Protestants still think. Compare Matth. iv. 8. 9. 10. with Rev. xiii. 3.—8.

But let us next give our thoughts to this, that the Nicene confession of the faith was made for the empire: it was designed to be the confession of the faith of the whole empire distributed under the clergy. Now, let even a Popish writer *, who cannot be suspected of disaffection to the state of the church that then was, give us an account of the people who had this faith. He says, “As to the manners
“ of believers, Christianity becoming the common and
“ almost general religion in the Roman empire, we must
“ not be surpris'd if there were abundance of persons
“ who were only Christians in name, and who led a
“ life almost heathenish.” Here is a faith without works with a witness. The prime national faith, the faith of the

* Dupin.

council of Nice, that famous original of all national confessions of faith, appears to be a faith without good works : and let James tell us what sort of faith that is. Some shew much zeal for the orthodoxy of the national faith ; but James tells us plainly, that, hold off works, the devils can be **ORTHODOX**.

And here I would ask them who hold the faith pointed out in the letter on catechisms, to be no other than the faith of devils, what they take their beloved national faith to be ? Can they say any more of the persuasion of the truth of their catechism, but that to have this persuasion is to be of good sound orthodox belief ? But the belief of the truth, by their assertion, is only the faith of devils ; what then do they contend for, in contending so earnestly for sound principles, and orthodox belief ? Surely the design of all the stir and noise they make, cannot be merely this, to make us no better than devils.

Or, do they expect to make the nation shew its faith of the gospel by the works of the gospel, and to establish the nation in *every good work*, together with *every good word* ? If this be their meaning, then I should hope they would plead for the inseparable connection betwixt the sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, and all their believers of the truth will be saints. But alas, a national faith, with all the power of the nation establishing it, was never able to produce love and good works. The word of the apostles did this, and can do it still, by its power working in them that believe it ; but they proposed only to take a people out of the nations for God's name. And to this agree the words of the prophets about the nations, Acts xv. 14.—17.

Let us, in the last place, take a view of the fruits of that first national faith, and the works that attended it. The first fruit of it was persecution. The apostolic faith had been persecuted ; but the power of the empire began to be employed in defence of this faith, as soon as it was given forth by the council. The effect of this was dissimulation in some who feared the defending power ; and as to Arius himself, and two bishops called *Secundus* and *Theonas*, who would not profess the faith, their fate was exile. Thus, persecution by Christians began as the product of the Nicene faith ; and I suppose you will not be positive to deny, that this is the work of the devil. To this you may add the many famous strifes among the clergy, contending who should have

have most of the power and glory of the kingdoms of this world? which contention began then, and continues to this day, where-ever there is any occasion or opportunity for it, as there will, in all appearance, still be more or less, to the end of the world. And as religion was then often the pretext in the clergy's strivings for power and honour in this world, so I reckon it will be to the end.

Thus you see a faith, not in the words of the Holy Ghost's teaching, but in the words of the teaching of man's wisdom, leaning on human authority, and supported with secular power, connected with the power and glory of the kingdoms of this world, in separation from the zeal of good works, and from bearing the cross after Christ, and producing persecution, accompanied with dissimulation, pride, and ambition, the works of the devil; and you may add covetousness, 2 Pet. ii. 3. If you see this, you can say you see the faith of devils as it may be seen among men.

And you can be in no strait to distinguish this from the belief of the testimony of God, in his own word, begot and maintained by the power of God, producing love and good works, with self-denial, mortification to the world, and patient bearing the cross; which is the faith of God's elect.

This is that faith which owns no standard but the scriptures of the inspired prophets and apostles, depends on no authority but that of God in these scriptures, admits no light but that which shines there, and receives no testimony but what is given there. As the letter on catechisms served the cause of this faith, I placed the usage it met with to the account of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ; and as this letter has no other drift, I am ready to do the same with it; still allowing every thing in it to be rejected that does not serve this purpose; yea, if you cast it into the fire, and cleave wholly to your Bible, you will lose nothing, and its end is gained.

And this is that faith, in the unity of which the whole body of Christ is growing up to a perfect man in him; but his people have been divided, enslaved to human authority, and confounded with the world, by creeds and catechisms. I conclude, withing you and yours a share in that prayer which you read, John xvii. 20. 21.; and am,

S I R,

Your, &c.

P O S T.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AS I am persuaded all that believe on Christ through the word of his apostles, are one, in spite of all the divisions that have been made among them by the doctrines and commandments of the leaders of the several sects among whom they have been scattered, I cannot but approve of that way of speaking that is now pretty common, *viz.* That they who are agreed in the main, ought to forbear one another in differences about things of lesser moment. But I want to know your mind of a remarkable text that has been often cited to support this saying; because it seems to point out that *main* wherein all true Christians should be agreed.

The text is Phil. iii. 7.—18. Notice these words, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss—that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.—Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

I must own to you I cannot perceive how one can walk by this same rule, and mind this same thing, in minding a worldly kingdom to Jesus Christ, or in walking up to the principles of uniformity, upon which national churches and national covenants have been built. The principles of the extirpation of heretics and schismatics to establish a kingdom of this world to Jesus Christ, are perfectly inconsistent with the minding of conformity to Christ in his humiliation in this life, and the desire of so attaining to the resurrection of the dead.

But when I would think as charitably as I can on this head, I consider that the disciples, in the days of the Lord's flesh, were much under the influence of the then prevailing notion of a worldly kingdom to the Messiah; and true Christians now may have received, by tradition from their

fathers, principles inconsistent with this same rule, which (in spite of the influence those principles have upon them) they are most inclined to walk by. For the apostle supposes, that in some things they may be *otherwise minded*, i. e. differently minded from that one rule, and so divided from one another. But the cure of these divisions must be the Lord's revealing this same thing more clearly to them, that they may see its inconsistency with those other opinions that they were entertaining. And till they see this, they can be no further agreed, but in as far as they are walking by this same rule, and minding this same thing, viz. the salvation that lies in the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory, and is to be enjoyed in the way of conformity to him in his sufferings in this life, as necessarily connected with, and preparing us for conformity to him in his glory in the resurrection of the dead.

As our Lord said to his disciples, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* it may be said to them that are minding a worldly kingdom to Christ, and seeking after a state of happy security from heretical apostasies, and from persecutions to the church in this present world, *O fools, and slow of heart to believe the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, with the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour! Ought not Christians to suffer with Christ in this life, and to enter into his glory in the life to come?*

The work of providence at this day is to fulfil the scripture, in *filling the antichristian kingdom with darkness*, at which the authors of the *judicial testimony*, with the believers of that testimony, are very much displeased; but if there be any believers of the gospel among them, it is no new thing to see them afflicted with that which is the ground of the greatest joy to them. Even the breaking of the dominion of the clergy by infidelity, now coming in place of the superstition that has supported that dominion since the days of Constantine, gives the believers of the gospel a glorious opportunity to *walk by the same rule*, and to *mind the same thing*, rejecting all the inconsistent doctrines that have divided them.

A LITERAL TRANSLATION of the TRUE DISCOURSE of CELSUS, as far as it can be gathered out of ORIGEN's eight Books against him.

[Translated about the year 1753, and now first printed.]

TOME I. From ORIGEN, book I.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

THE Christians make conventions amongst themselves secretly against the things by law established: for of conventions some are manifest, as many as take place according to laws; but the secret are as many as are done against the things established by law.

Their opinion is of barbarian original. And the barbarians are sufficient to find out opinions; but the Greeks are better to judge, and confirm, and exercise to virtue, the inventions of the barbarians.

They do and teach secretly the things that please themselves. And they do not this in vain, to wit, keeping off the judgment of death impending to them. This danger is like the dangers that happened in philosophy, as to Socrates. This being common to other philosophers, is not any grand or new instruction.

They think not those, gods, that are made with hands, for this: because it is not agreeable to reason, that those are gods, which are wrought by most vicious artificers and wicked in their manners, and that are often prepared by unjust men. Nor is this opinion peculiar to them.

They seem to have power with the names of some demons and with soothing incantations. Theirs is a hidden opinion.

I do not say this, that he who holds a good opinion, if he shall for it be in danger from men, ought to forsake or feign that he has forsaken, or become a denier of the opinion. There is something better than the earthly in man, near of kin to God. In whom this is well, *i. e.* the soul, it wholly affects its relation, I say, God; and they always desire to hear something to be remembered concerning him. But

opinions ought to be received following reason and with a rational guide; as deceit comes always to him that does not in this manner give assent to some. And they that believe without reason, are like to the gatherers of tribute to the mother of the gods, and to the observers of wonders, and to the celebrators of the rites of Mithra, and of Bacchus, and to any whom one meets with apparitions of Hecate, or another demon or demons. For as in these things often wicked men, taking advantage of the ignorance of those that are easily deceived, lead them to what they will; so likewise is done among the Christians. Some of them neither willing to give or receive a reason about the things they believe, use this, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith shall save thee. And they say the wisdom that is in the world is evil; but the folly good.

If they would answer me, not as seeking information, for I know all, but as having equal care of all; it should be well. And if they will not, but shall after their custom say, Do not examine, &c. it is necessary to teach them what sort of things those are which they say, and from whence they have flowed. This same Word has an affinity with many of the nations, who began such an opinion. The Word is highly ancient, about which certainly both the wisest nations and cities and wise men have always been conversant. The Egyptians, and Assyrians, and Indians, and Persians, and Odrysians, and Samothracians, and Eleusinians, and Hyperboreans, and Homer's Galactophagi, and the Druids of the Gauls, and the Getæ, these most wise and ancient nations have treated of things akin to these. And ancient and wise men, who have benefited them that were with them, and by their writings those that came after them, as Linus, and Musæus, and Orpheus, and Pherecydes, and the Persian Zoroastres, and Pythagoras, have treated of these; and their opinions are inserted in their books, and they are kept to this time.

Moses, therefore, having learned this Word from wise nations, and rational men, hath obtained a divine name. The Jews borrowed circumcision from the Egyptians. These goatherds and shepherds, following Moses their leader, being enticed by rustic frauds, esteemed God to be one. This one God they thought to be either the Most High or Adonai, or the Heavenly or Sabaoth, or howsoever they delight to name this very world; and nothing more knew they. It differs nothing to call the God over all, either by
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the name current among the Greeks, *Jupiter*, or by this (say) among the Indians, or that among the Egyptians. The Jews worship angels, and give themselves to enchantment, of which Moses was to them the interpreter. I shall teach afterward, how the Jews also were deceived through ignorance, being seduced.

But I will first speak of the leader of this generation, as far as they are Christians. He, before a very few years, led the way of this doctrine, being esteemed by Christians to be the Son of God.

S E C T. I.

A Jew would say to this Jesus, who feigned his nativity to be of a virgin, (borrowing from the Grecian fables of Danae, and Melanippe, and Auge, and Antiope), that he sprung from a Jewish village, and from a woman of the place, poor and working for her bread, who was put away by her espoused husband, by trade a carpenter; convicted of having committed adultery, being deflowered by some soldier, whose name was *Panthera*; and having been put away by her husband, and wandering about ignominiously, she privately brought forth Jesus; and that he, being obliged through poverty to serve for hire in Egypt, and there having had experience of certain powers, wherein the Egyptians boast themselves, returned highly conceited of these powers, and for them proclaimed himself God. Was the mother of Jesus beautiful? and did God, whose nature admits not the love of a corruptible body, mix with her as beautiful? Nor was it probable, that God should be in love with her, who was neither a woman of fortune, nor of royal descent; seeing she was scarce known to her neighbours. And when she was hated by the carpenter, and cast out, neither did the divine power save her; nor the faithful Word. These things therefore are nothing to the kingdom of God.

When thou wast washed with John, the apparition of a fowl from the air, thou sayest, flew upon thee. What witness worthy of credit saw this vision? or who heard the voice from heaven adopting thee Son to God; but that thou sayest, and adducest some one of those punished with thee?

But my prophet in Jerusalem sometime said, that the Son of God will come the judge of the pious, and the punisher
of

of the unjust. What more thou than innumerable others, who came after this prophecy, are they of whom he prophesied these things? Some enthusiasts and some impostors have said, that the Son of God hath come from above. If thou sayest this, that every man, according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God; wherein then art thou different from another? Multitudes will reprove Jesus, affirming that those things are said of themselves, which were prophesied of him.

The Chaldeans were said by Jesus to have been moved to come to his birth, worshipping him, yet a babe, as God; and that they shewed this to Herod the tetrarch, and that he sent to kill them that were born at the same time, thinking to take him off together with them, lest, living to a sufficient time, he should reign. If it was lest, being grown up, thou shouldst reign in his place; why, after thou art indeed grown up, dost thou not reign? But thou, the child of God, gatherest so ignobly, hiding for fear, and going up and down to misery. Jesus having got to himself ten or eleven infamous men, publicans and most wicked sailors, withdrew himself with these hither and thither, gathering victuals basely and fordidly.

But what need was there to transport thee, yet an infant, into Egypt, lest thou shouldst be killed? for it was not like God to be fearful about death. And an angel indeed came from heaven, bidding thee and those of thy family flee, lest, being apprehended, ye should be slain. But was not that great God able to preserve thee, his own Son, in that same place, who had already sent two angels on thy account?

The ancient fables, attributing divine generation to Perseus, and Amphion, and Æacus, and Minos, (to which we give no credit), at the same time shewed their great and marvellous deeds and truly above man; that they might not seem improbable. But thou truly, what hast thou shewed us egregious or wonderful in word or deed; though called upon in the temple to shew thyself the child of God by some manifest sign? Supposing to be true, as many things as are written concerning healings and the resurrection, or concerning a few loaves feeding many, of which many fragments were left, or as many other things as the disciples, speaking marvellously, have narrated; come let us believe these to be wrought by thee: they are of the same nature with the works of inchanters, as promising more wonderful things; and with the things performed by them that have
learned

learned from the Egyptians, giving for a little money, in the midst of the markets, the grand things they have learned, and expelling demons from men, and blowing off diseases, and calling up the souls of heroes, yea shewing sumptuous suppers and tables, and meats differently dressed, that are not; and as animals moving, not being truly animals, but to the fancy appearing such. Because they do these things, are we therefore to believe them to be sons of God? or should it not rather be said, that these are the arts of wicked and unhappy men?

The body of God would not be such an one as thine. The body of God would not have been so begot, as thou, O Jesus, wast begot; nor would God's body eat such meats as thou: but neither would the body of God use such a voice, nor such a persuasion.

These were the things of one hated of God, and of a wretched impostor.

S E C T. II. From Origen, book II.

THE Jew may also say to the Jewish followers of Jesus, What ailed you, O countrymen, that you leave the law of your country, and being enticed by him, with whom we have been now discoursing, have been most ridiculously deceived, and become fugitives from us to another name, and to another manner of life? Yesterday, and the day before, and when we punished him that led you as cattle, you made defection from the law of your country. Or how do you begin at our sacred things, but in your progress despise them, not having another beginning of doctrine to speak of than our law? For if any foretold to you, that the child of God would come to men, that was our prophet, and the prophet of our God.

Justice was done by the Jews upon Jesus, who had done wickedly, boasting, deceiving, and lying. Many others might have appeared, such as was Jesus, to them that would be deceived.

And how should we, who have shewed to all men, that one would come from God, punishing the unjust, treat him ignominiously, when he came? Why did we despise him, whom we have foretold? Was it that we should be punished more than others?

But how were we to esteem him God, who (beside other things,

things, as has been heard) shewed the performance of nothing that he promised; and after we, convicting and condemning him, counted him worthy to be punished, he was taken hiding, and most basely flying, and was betrayed by those whom he called his disciples. And truly, it neither suits with him that is God, to fly, nor to be led away bound; and yet less to be deserted and betrayed by his familiars, and them that partook with him in all things, and that used him as their teacher, and accounted him the favour, and the child and messenger of the greatest God. No good general and captain of many myriads was ever betrayed: yea, neither a wicked chief robber, and commanding those more wicked than himself, if he appeared useful to his companions. But he that was betrayed by those who were under him, neither commanded like a good general; nor did that deceiver procure from the deceived that benevolence, so to speak, which robbers have to their chief. Having many true things to say concerning the affairs of Jesus, and not agreeable to those that are written by the disciples of Jesus, I willingly pass them.

His disciples feigned that he foreknew and foretold all things whatsoever happened to him. In a manifest matter, having no evasion, they devised this, that he said and foreknew all. The disciples said these things to excuse their master; as if one, saying that one is just, should point him out doing unjustly; and calling him pious, shew him committing murder; and calling him immortal, set him forth dead; prefacing to all these, that they came to pass as he foretold. For ye do not say this, that he appeared indeed to ungodly men to suffer these things, yet did not suffer; but you confess that he suffered openly. How is it credible that he foretold? and how is the dead immortal?

Who, either god or demon, or wise man, foreseeing such things coming upon him, would not shun them if he could, but would fall into the things he certainly knew before? How, if he foretold both him that betrayed him, and him that denied him, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not yet betray, nor the other deny? but they betrayed and denied, making no account of him. For certainly even a man conspired against and foreknowing, if he forewarn the conspirators, they will turn away, and take care of themselves. These things therefore came not to pass in consequence of being foretold; for that is impossible. But in consequence of their coming to pass, their being foretold

foretold is found a lie: for it is altogether inconsistent, that they who heard before, should yet betray and deny.

Being God he foretold these things; and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass: God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that they should be ungodly and impious; whom it especially behoved to do good to all men, but in a distinguishing manner to his own companions! A man was never yet conspired against by his table-companion, but he that eat with God became a conspirator! and, which is yet more absurd, God himself conspired against his table-companions, making them betrayers and impious!

If these things seemed good to him, and he was punished obeying his Father; it is manifest, that to him, being God, and also willing, these usages, according to his mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why then does he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the fear of destruction may pass away, saying thus, O Father, if it be possible for this cup to pass. Neither, lying, could you set forth your fictions with a shew of probability. Some of them that believe, as being intoxicate, come the length to allow themselves to change the gospel from the first writing, three ways, and four, and more, and to transform, that they may be capable to deny to them that confute them.

Christians make use of the prophets as preaching before the things concerning Jesus. But the sayings of the prophets can be applied to innumerable others, much more probably than to Jesus. The prophets say, that he that is to come is a great and mighty Lord of the whole earth, and of all nations and armies. But they did not hold forth such a pestilent fellow. None would commend God and the Son of God from such signs and rumours, nor from so ignoble marks. For as the sun, enlightening all other things, first shews himself, so it behoved the Son of God to do.

Ye are sophistical in saying, that the Son is (*αυτολογος*) the very *Logos*. If indeed the *Logos* is to you the Son of God, we also applaud. But after promising the *Logos* to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and holy *Logos*, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified.

Ye please yourselves too much, making the genealogy from the first-born, and from the kings that were among

the Jews. Surely the wife of the carpenter did not know that she had got such a kindred.

And what noble thing did Jesus as God, despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel him? He said not, as the Bacchus of Euripides, The demon himself shall loose me when I will. But neither did he that condemned him, suffer any thing like Pentheus, going mad and torn. When he wore the purple robe, and the crown of thorns, and the reed in his hand, why did he not, if not before, yet now at least, manifest something divine, and deliver himself from that shame, and treat them that reproached both him and his Father, as they deserved? What! and is the gore from the body of him that was crucified, such as that which flows from the blessed gods? He greedily swallowed the gall and vinegar, impatient of thirst. Do ye thus accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these things for the help of men, and that we might despise punishments? He that persuaded no body while he lived, not even his own disciples, was punished and suffered such things, as not having shewed himself pure from all evils; nor was he irreprehensible. Surely ye will not say of him, that, not having persuaded those who are here, he withdrew to Hades, persuading them that are there. If, finding out absurd apologies, wherein you are ridiculously imposed on, ye think ye make a true defence; what hinders others also to account as many, as being condemned have perished miserably, to be these great and divine angels? One could, with the like impudence, also say of a punished robber and murderer, that this was not indeed a robber, but God; for he said before to his fellow-robbers, that he would suffer such things as he suffered. Then they that were with him while living, and heard his voice, and used him as their teacher, seeing him punished and dying, neither suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments; but they even denied that they were disciples. Yet now ye die with him. When he came, he drew no more than ten most profligate sailors and publicans; neither did he persuade all these. If living indeed he persuaded none, but, when he is dead, they that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd?

By what reasoning were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God? We were induced by this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness.

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What then? Have not many others also suffered punishment, and no less ignobly? We esteem him to be the Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and (as ye say) raised the dead. O light and truth! With his own voice he hath expressly confessed, according as ye also have written, Wherefore there shall come to you others also using the like powers, wicked men and impostors: and he names one Satan the worker of these things. So that he denies not, that these things are indeed nothing divine, but the works of the wicked. And being forced by the truth, he hath at once revealed the things of others, and reprov'd his own things. How is it not then miserable, from the same works to reckon one God, and others impostors? For why from these things should we rather think others evil than him, using his own testimony? For he himself hath indeed confessed these things not of a divine nature, but to be the marks of deceivers and very wicked men. By what then were ye induced? Was it because he foretold, how, being dead, he would rise again? Come, and let us believe indeed that he said this. But how many others have dealt in such wonders to persuade the simple hearers, studying to deceive them? as Zamolxis among the Scythians, called the servant of Pythagoras, and Pythagoras in Italy, and Rampsinus in Egypt, who played at dice with Ceres in Hades, and brought away a golden basin as a gift from her; Orpheus also among the Odrysians, and Protefilaus in Thessaly, and Hercules in Tenænis, and Theseus. But this is to be considered, if any being truly dead, arose at any time with the same body. Or do ye think that those of others are and appear to be fables? But to you his voice, when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe of the drama! Yea, that living indeed, he could not help himself, but being dead, he arose and shewed the marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been pierced! Who saw this? A mad woman, as ye say, and if there was any other of the same magical gang, either in some sort dreaming and disposed to be deceived, by fancying an apparition (which has often happened to very many), or rather inclining to astonish the rest by such a wonder, and by such a lie to give occasion to the other impostors.

If Jesus would really declare his divine power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him ill, and to him

that condemned him, and indeed unto all. For surely he no more feared any man, being dead, and, as ye say, being God: nor was he for this sent from the beginning, that he should abscond. But if so, then he ought, for the manifestation of his godhead, to have at least disappeared directly from the cross. Who hides himself, that is sent a messenger, at any time, when he ought to report the things given him in commission? When he was disbelieved in the body, he preached to all freely; but when he was exhibiting strong faith, being risen from the dead, he appears in private to a single woman, and to his intimate companions. When he suffered punishment, he was indeed seen to all; but, rising, to one; whereof the contrary ought to have been.

If he wanted to be hid, why was the voice heard from heaven, proclaiming him the Son of God? But if he would not be hid, why was he crucified, or why did he die?

From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witness: for ye fall in your own snare.

O most high and heavenly! what God coming to men was disbelieved, and appeared to them that hoped for these things? Or why indeed was he not known to them that long expected him?

He threatens and reproaches without gravity, when he says, *Wo unto you*, and, *I tell you before*: for in these he openly confesses, that he cannot persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet with a prudent man.

We hope surely to rise in the body, and to have eternal life, and that the Sent unto us will be the pattern and first leader of this; shewing that it is not impossible with God to raise any man with the body. Where is he then, that we may see and believe? Or did he descend for this, that we might not believe?

He indeed was therefore a man; and such an one as the truth manifests, and what is said shews.

S E C T. III. From Origen, book III.

THE Christians and the Jews contend with one another most foolishly; and their dispute about Christ differs nothing from that, called, A fight about the shadow of an ass, according to the proverb. There is nothing
grave

grave in the question betwixt the Jews and the Christians; both believing it to be foretold by the divine Spirit, that one should come a Saviour to mankind, but not yet agreeing, whether he that is foretold be come or not.

What the Jews did to the Egyptians, they themselves suffered from those that were added to Jesus, and believed him to be the Christ; and the cause of new religion to both, was sedition against the commonwealth. The Hebrews, being Egyptians, took their beginning from sedition; and the others, being Jews, about the times of Jesus, became seditious against the commonwealth of the Jews, and followed Jesus.

If all men would be Christians, they would not yet allow of it. In their beginning, indeed, they were few, and were of one mind; but being sown into a multitude, they are again and again cut and divided; and each of them will have their own parties; for this they wanted from the beginning. And being again divided through multitude, these reprove those, yet partaking, if yet they partake, so to speak, of one name; and they are together ashamed that this alone is left: but all beside they dispose, some one way, some another. Their connection indeed is the more wonderful, the more it is demonstrated to be established on no available principle. But the available principle is the sedition, and the advantage of it, and the fear of them that are without: these establish the faith to them.

They use every artifice, and forge together objects of terror. May neither they, nor I, nor any other man, reject the old opinion of punishing the unjust, and rewarding the righteous.

They forging together the misapprehensions of an ancient word, prepossess men with the play and sound of these, as they who dun with noise those who are initiated to the mysteries of Ceres.

The matters of their faith may be compared to the practices of the Egyptians, with whom splendid sacred places with groves and temples, with vestibles and porches, to be admired for extraordinary grandeur and beauty, and ceremonies, very religious and mystical, will offer to the view of one that comes; but when he enters, he will see the object of worship a cat, or ape, or crocodile, a goat, or dog. These venerable things of the Egyptians, affirming that there is in these brutes, either some symbol of divinity, or whatever other name the prophets please to give them,

them, have a certain appearance of no vain mysteries to them that are skilled in such things. The Egyptians are laughed at by them, though they set forth many, and not foolish riddles, seeing they teach, that these are the honours of eternal ideas, and not (as many think) of animals that soon perish. But they are fools, bringing in nothing more venerable than the goats and dogs of the Egyptians, in their narrations concerning Jesus. They will not bear, that we should think Castor, and Pollux, and Hercules, and Æsculapius, and Bacchus, gods; because they were men, though the chief, and certainly shewing many and excellent deeds for the sake of men: but they say, that Jesus when dead was seen by his own companions; they say, he was seen, and that a shade. After Aristeas the Proconnesian had disappeared so divinely from among men, and again shewed himself manifestly, and many ages afterward, had travelled through many places of the world, and reported wonderful things; and Apollo had chosen Aristeas to the Metapontins, to abide in the lot of the gods; no body yet esteems him a god. No body esteems Abaris the Hyperborean a god, who had such power as to be carried with a shot arrow. It is said of Clazomenius, that his soul, often leaving the body, went about without the body, and neither have men esteemed him a god: nor Cleomedes the Astypalaian, who, entering into an ark, and taken from within it, was not found within, but flew out by a certain divine fate, when some brake the ark to take him. And any one may tell of many others such like.

They who worship him that was taken and put to death, do much the same with the Getæ, worshipping Zamolxis; and the Cilicians, Mopsus; and the Acarnans, Amphilocheus; and the Thebans, Amphiaraus; and the Lebadians, Trophonius. Nor do the honours paid to Adrian's beloved youth Antinous, in Antinoupolis of Egypt, differ any thing from the honour they give to Jesus. If you would compare Apollo or Jupiter to him, they would not bear it.

Faith, prepossessing their soul, makes this sort of an assent concerning Jesus. Him, being of a mortal body, they esteem God; and in this they think they do piety. — But putting off the impure infirmities of flesh, he will then be God. Why then not rather Æsculapius, and Bacchus, and Hercules? They laugh at the worshippers of Jupiter, seeing his sepulchre is shown in Crete; and nevertheless worship him

him who is of the sepulchre, not knowing how and for what the Cretians do that.

Such things are commanded by some esteemed Christians, not the most prudent, but most unlearned, Let none come, who is learned, none wise, none prudent: for these things are esteemed evil among us. But if any be unlearned, if any foolish, if any be a child, let him come boldly. Hence, confessing that these are worthy of their God, they are manifest, that they neither will nor can persuade any other but the foolish, and ignoble, and stupid, and slaves, and girls, and boys.

Otherwise, what is evil in being learned, and having carefully studied the best reasons, and in being, and appearing to be prudent? and what hinderance is this to the knowledge of God? yea doth it not rather conduce to it? and by this rather one may be enabled to come to the truth. But we see indeed those also who are shewing infamous tricks and juggling in the market-places, never coming to a company of prudent men, nor daring to shew their tricks among them; but where they see young people, and a croud of slaves and of foolish men, there thrusting in and making a fine show. And we likewise see in their houses, wool-dressers, and leatherscutters, and fullers, and the most illiterate and most rustic, not daring indeed to say any thing before the more aged and more prudent masters; but when they take the boys aside, and some foolish girls with them, telling some wonderful things, as that they ought not to take heed to the father and to the teachers, but believe them, because these are delirious and beside themselves, and neither see nor can do any thing truly good, being prepossessed with vain trifles; but that they alone know how it is necessary to live; and if the boys hearken to them, they will be blessed, and the house appear happy; and withal saying, (if they see any of the teachers, and more prudent or even the father coming, the more modest indeed of them are scared, but the more bold encourage the boys to throw off the reins), whispering such things, as, when the father is present and the teachers, they will not, nor can explain any thing good to the boys, for they are afraid of the folly and cruelty of those who are altogether corrupted, and have gone to the utmost length of wickedness, and punish them; but if they would, they ought, leaving the father and the teachers, to go with the girls, and the boys, their playfellows, to the womens apartment, or to the leather shop, or fuller's shop,
that

that they may attain perfection; even saying these things they persuade.

But, that I may accuse no more bitterly than as far as truth constrains, let any one observe these also. For they who call to other mysteries, proclaim before these things, Whoever is pure in hands and prudent in speech; and again others, Whoever is pure from every crime, and whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and whose lived well and justly; and these things they proclaim before, who promise the purgations of sins. But let us hear now whom these call: Whoever, they say, is a sinner, whoever is without understanding; whoever is childish, and, to say plainly, whoever is wretched, the kingdom of God will receive him. The sinner then, do ye not say that he is the unjust, and the thief, and the breaker through of walls, and the poisoner, and the committer of sacrilege, and the breaker into tombs? Whom else would one proclaiming before, call to be robbers?

They say that God is sent to sinners. But why was he not sent to them that are without sin? What evil is there in not having sinned? They dictate, that God will receive an unjust man, if he humble himself under his wretchedness; but the just, if he look up to him with virtue from the beginning, him he will not receive. Men presiding rightly in judgment, make them that wail for injuries to cease from piteous moans, that they may not be judged by mercy rather than by truth; but God, then, judges not by truth, but by flattery! This indeed is very true, that mankind is some way naturally disposed to sin. It was necessary, then, simply to call all, seeing all sin. What then is this prerogative of sinners? And truly it is every way manifest, that none can, not even punishing, much less shewing mercy, wholly change them that are disposed by nature, and accustomed to sin. For to change nature perfectly, is the most difficult of all things. But they that are without sin, are partakers of a better life. They commonly say that God can do all things. But he will not do any thing unjust. So then, like unto them that are subject to compassion, God being subject to commiseration of those that plead pity, relieves the bad, and the good doing no such thing he rejects!

A teacher among Christians will say,—The wise shun the things said by us, being made to err, and intangled by wisdom:—The Christian preacher tells ridiculous things. —No prudent man gives ear to the word, being scared by the
multitude

multitude of them that come to it.—The teacher seeks after fools.—The teacher of the things of Christianity does much like one, promising indeed to heal bodies, but dissuading from attending to learned physicians, by whom his unskilfulness might be reprov'd.—I alone will save you.—They that are truly physicians, corrupt those whom they promise to heal.—A teacher among them does like, as if one drunk, coming to them that are drunk, should accuse the sober as drunk; or like one that sees ill, accusing to the ill-sighted, those who see clearly, as blind.

I indeed blame these things and such like, that I may not enumerate all. And I say they trespass wickedly; being contumelious to God, that they may allure evil men with vain hopes, and persuade to despise the better things, as if they should abstain from them, it would be better for them.

S E C T. IV. From Origen, book IV.

SOME Christians and the Jews, the one saying there has descended; the other, there is to descend to the earth some God or Son of God, the justifier of them that are here; this is most base; and the confutation needs not many words. What did God mean by such a descent? Was it that he might learn the affairs of men? for did he not know all? he knew then indeed, but he did not rectify, nor was it possible for him, by divine power to rectify, if some one were not sent, that should be born to this purpose!

If God himself shall descend to men, this will be the consequence, that he must desert his own throne. For if you should change any one thing, even the least here, all things overturned would go upon you to ruin. For surely God being unknown amongst men, and thinking himself at a loss upon this, would wish to be known, and make trial of believers and unbelievers, even as men newly enriched, shewing a manifold and altogether mortal ambition, testify against God.—Not needing to be known for himself, but for our salvation, he will give us the knowledge of himself, that they who receive it, becoming good, might be saved; but they who receive it not, being demonstrated evil, might be punished. Now, therefore, after so long a course of time, God remembered to justify the life of men, but before he minded it not! It is manifest therefore, that they murmur these things concerning God neither holily nor purely.

And they feign these things to the terror of the vulgar; neither say they true things concerning necessary punishments to them that have sinned. So that they are like those who bring forth spectres and fearful sights in the mysteries of Bacchus.

It has come to them also, mistaking these things of Greek and barbarian authors, that certainly according to the revolutions of far distant times, and the recessions and conjunctions of the stars, conflagrations and deluges will happen, and after that last deluge in the time of Deucalion, the period according to the retribution of the whole requires a conflagration. These things have made them, by an erroneous opinion, to say, that God will descend after the manner of a tormentor bringing fire.

Yet now let us resume the discourse from above with more arguments. Now I say nothing but things established of old. God is good, and beautiful, and happy, and in the most comely and the best. If indeed he descend to men, there must be a change upon him, even a change from good to bad, and from comely to vile, and from happiness to misery, and from the best to the worst. Who then would chuse such a change? And certainly it is natural indeed to that which is mortal to be altered and transformed; but to the immortal to be still the same thing, and in the same manner. By no means therefore would God admit of this change. Either God is truly changed, as they say, into a mortal body, and that is before said to be impossible; or he is not indeed changed, but makes the beholders think so, and deceives and lies. But deceit and a lie are otherwise indeed evil, but only if, as in the part of poison, one should use them, either to sick and distracted friends, curing them, or to enemies, taking care to escape danger. But neither is any sick or mad a friend to God, nor is God afraid of any, that deceiving he should escape danger.

The Jews on their part say, that, life being filled with all wickedness, one should be sent from God, that the unrighteous may be punished, and all things purged, analogous to what came to pass by the first deluge. The ruin of the tower is like to that deluge purifying the earth. What Moses writes of the tower, and confusion of dialects, is a corruption of the story of the Aloidæ. And what he tells of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire for sin, is like the story of Phaeton. And the Christians again adding some words to those said by the Jews, say that the Son of God is already

already sent for the sins of the Jews; and that the Jews, punishing Jesus, and giving him gall to drink, drew gall from God upon themselves.

The Jews and the Christians are like a company of bats or ants coming forth from their holes, or frogs gathered in council about the ditch, or worms assembled in a corner of the clay, and contending with one another, which of them should be the greatest sinners. And they say that God foreshewed and foretold all things to us; and, leaving the whole world and the heavenly motion, and overlooking the wide earth, manages the government amongst us only, and with us alone he corresponds, and ceases not to send and seek how we should be ever with him. As worms they say that God is, then after him we made by him altogether like God; and all things are subjected to us, the earth, and water, and air, and the stars; and all things are for our sakes, and are ordained to serve us. Now, because some among us have done wickedly, God will come to us, or send his Son, that he may burn up the unjust, and that we, who remain, may have eternal life with him. These things are more tolerable, said by worms or frogs, than declared by Jews or Christians contending against one another.

The Jews were fugitives from Egypt. These men, God's friends, never did any thing worth the speaking of; nor were they ever held in any esteem, nor in any account. They took in hand to draw their genealogy from the first seed of magicians, and men that were deceivers, bringing for witness obscure and ambiguous sayings, hid some where in darkness, and explaining them to those that are unlearned and without understanding. There was never any controversy in the great time that was before concerning such names; but now the Jews dispute about them with some others.

Severals have laid claim to antiquity, as the Athenians, and Egyptians, and Arcadians, and Phrygians, saying, that some with them sprang from the earth, and each of them bringing evidences of these; but the Jews in some corner of Palestine conspiring, wholly unlearned, and not having heard before those things sung of old by Hesiod and innumerable other divinely inspired men, have composed, most improbably and most inelegantly, a certain man formed by the hands of God, and inspired, and a girl from his side, and commandments of God, and a serpent opposing these, and the serpent getting the better of God's commands; such

a fable as is told by old wives: and they most impiously make God straight from the beginning weak, and not able to persuade one man, whom he had formed. Then a deluge, and monstrous ark having all things within it, and a dove and a crow messengers; adulterating and falsifying Deucalion: for I reckon they had no forethought of these things coming to light, but were plainly telling a fable to infant-boys.

The begetting of children out of time—the treacheries of brethren—the father's grief—the wiles of mothers—the wealth acquired by Jacob with Laban—that God gave his sons asses, and sheep, and camels—that God also gave wells to the just—the things concerning Lot and his daughters, more unlawful than the Thyeſtian evils—the hatred of Esau to Jacob—Simeon and Levi going upon the injury of their sister forced by the son of the king of Shechem—the brothers selling the son of Jacob, and the brother sold, Joseph, and the father deceived, Jacob, seeing he had no suspicion of his son shewing Joseph's coat of many colours, but believing them, lamented as lost Joseph serving in Egypt—the dreams of the chief butler and of the chief baker, and of Pharaoh, and the interpretation of them; consequently Joseph was led forth from the prison, that he might be intrusted by Pharaoh with the second throne among the Egyptians—and the sold made beneficent to the selling brothers famished, and sent to market with asses—and made known again to them—Joseph, who was sold for a slave, made free, and with pomp returning to his father's funeral, by whom that illustrious and divine generation of the Jews, sown into a multitude in Egypt, was commanded to sojourn somewhere without, and feed cattle in vile places—till their flight: the more moderate both of the Jews and Christians allegorize these things, and being ashamed of them, fly to the allegory; yet these are not such things as admit any allegory, but are manifestly told as the merest fables. The allegories therefore that appear to have been writ concerning them, are much more shameful and absurd than the fables, by a marvellous and altogether shameless folly putting things together, that can no where no way be fitly connected. I knew of that sort a dispute of one Papiscus and Jason, not worthy of laughter, but rather of pity and hatred. I do not therefore set myself to confute them; for they are every way manifest,
and

and especially if one would have patience and bear to give attention to the writings themselves.

But I would rather teach this, according to nature, that God made nothing mortal; but whatsoever things are immortal, these indeed are the works of God, but the mortal of others. And the soul truly is the work of God, but the nature of the body is different. And in this respect the body of a bat, or worm, or frog, or man differs nothing: for the matter is the same, and the corruptible of them alike. The nature of all the foresaid bodies is common, and, being one, goes and returns into reiterating change. And nothing begotten of matter is immortal. So much suffices concerning this. If any could hear and inquire after more, he shall know.

Evils in beings, neither before, nor now, nor afterward, are less and more: for the nature of all things is one and the same; and the generation of evils still the same. The world is unbegotten and incorruptible, and only the things on earth suffer deluges and conflagrations, and these things do not befall all at once. What should be the nature of evils, is not indeed easy to be known to one that does not philosophize. But it is enough to be said to the multitude, that evils are not indeed from God, but cleave to matter, and govern them that are evil. Now, the circuit of mortal things is alike from beginning to end, and, according to the established revolutions, there is a necessity, that the same things always both have been, and are, and shall be; nor are these things given to man, but each of them comes into being, and perishes for the sake of the safety of the whole, according to the foresaid change from others to others. If any thing seem evil to thee, it is not yet manifest if it be evil: for thou knowest not that it is useful either to thee, or to another, or to the whole.

Their writings ascribe human passions to God, speaking of his wrath against the ungodly, and threatenings against sinners. For is it not ridiculous, if a man indeed, being angry at the Jews, should destroy them all to a man, and burn the city, they were so naughty; but the greatest God, as they say, being angry, and enraged, and threatening, sends his Son, and he suffers such things?

But that the discourse may not be concerning the Jews only (for that is not what I say), but concerning all nature, which I promised, I will more manifestly shew the things before said.

They

They say that God made all things for man. Thunders, and lightnings, and rains are not the works of God. And if one should grant these to be the works of God, they are no more for nourishment to us men, than to the plants, and trees, and herbs, and thorns. And if you should say, that these grow to men, viz. the plants, and trees, and herbs, and thorns; what more will ye say they grow to men than to brute animals the most wild? We indeed, working hard and wretched, are scarcely and laboriously nourished, but all things grow to them unsown and untilld. But if you shall say this of Euripides, That the sun and night serve mortal men; what more us than the ants and flies? for to them also the night is for rest, and the day for seeing and working. If any should say, that we are the princes of animals, because we hunt other animals and feast on them; we shall say, Have not we rather been made for them, because they hunt and eat us? But also, we have need of nets, and arms, and many men assisting, and dogs against the hunted beasts. But nature hath furnished them readily with arms of their own, which easily subdue us to them. To what you say, that God has granted you to be able to take and kill the wild beasts, we answer, that (as it seems) before there were cities, and arts, and such commerce, and armour, and nets, men were caught and eaten by the wild beasts; but the wild beasts were not taken by men. And in this respect God has rather subjected men to the wild beasts. If for this men seem to excel the brutes, because they inhabit cities, and use the commonwealth, and magistracies, and governments, this is nothing to the purpose; for the ants and bees do the same. The bees then have a ruler, have a following, and service, and battles, and victories, and destructions of the vanquished, and cities, and precincts, and succession of works, and judgments executed upon the idle and the evil; then they expel and punish the drones. And the ants are most industrious in providing for the winter;—they help one another with their burdens, when they see any one fatigued;—to the dead ants the living set apart some proper place, and this is to them the monuments of their fathers. Yea, and meeting one another they discourse, so that they do not wander from the ways. Is not therefore the completeness of reason with them, and common notices of certain universals, and a voice both occasional and significant? Now then, if one were to look down from heaven upon the earth,

which

which would he think to excel, the things done by us, or those by the ants and bees? But if men value themselves somewhat also by magic, yet now, even according to this, serpents and eagles are wiser, seeing they know many antidotes against poison, and remedies of evils, yea, and the powers also of certain stones for the preservation of their young, which if men obtain, they think they have a possession worthy of admiration. But if man be thought to excel other animals, because he apprehends the divine notice, let them that say this know, that even in this many other animals will be opposed; and very likely: for what would one call more divine than to know and foresaw things to come? Now, men learn this from other animals, and chiefly from birds. And as many as perceive the indication of these, they are prophets. But now, if birds and prophetic animals whatsoever teach us by symbols things foreknown from God, these seem to be so much the nearer to the divine conversation, and to be wiser and most beloved of God. And intelligent men say, that they also hold conferences, manifestly holier than ours; and that they understand the things said, and in fact shew, that they understand them, when telling before, that the birds said how they would go somewhere, and would do this or that; they shew them going there, and doing the things that they already foretold. But nothing appears to be more observant of an oath, nor more faithful toward divine things, than the elephants; most certainly; for that they have the knowledge of him. The storks are more pious than men, requiting, and bringing nourishments to their parents; and that Arabian bird the Phoenix, after many years coming into Egypt, and carrying its dead father, and burying him in a globe of myrrh, and putting him in the temple of the sun.

These things therefore are not made to man, as neither to the lion, nor the eagle, nor the dolphin; but that this world as the work of God might be entire and perfect out of all things. For the sake of this all things have been measured, not of one another, but, if not every work, yet of the whole. And the whole is God's care; and Providence at no time forsakes this, nor does it become worse; nor does God, through time, turn to it; nor is he angry because of men, as neither of apes nor mice; each of whom, in part, has received a portion of it.

TOME

TOME II. SECT. I. From Origen, book V.

GOD indeed, O Jews and Christians, and no child of God, neither descended nor would descend. But if ye speak of certain angels, say who these are, gods? or some other kind? Some other; as it seems, demons.

First, then, the Jews may be justly wondered at, if indeed they worship the heaven and angels that are there; but the most venerable and most powerful parts of it, the sun and moon, and the other stars, both fixed and planets, these they despise; as if it were possible that the whole indeed should be God, but the parts of it not divine; or it were very well indeed to worship them that are said to approach any where in darkness to those that are blinded by wrong magic, or that dream by obscure apparitions; but to make no account of those, which prophesy so clearly and splendidly to all, by which are brought forth rains, and heats, and clouds, and thunders, (which they worship), and lightnings, and fruits, and every production, by which God is revealed to them, the most conspicuous preachers of those that are above, the truly heavenly angels. This also is their folly, to think, that after God, like a cook, has brought in fire, the whole other kind will be boiled away; but that they alone will remain, not only the living, but also they who are some time of old dead, emerging from the earth with their same fleshes; plainly the hope of worms! For what sort of soul of man would desire yet the body putrefied? When neither is this your doctrine common even to some of Christians, and they shew it to be very impure; and abominable withal, and impossible: for what sort of body altogether corrupted, can return to the nature it had from the beginning, and the very same first constitution from which it was dissolved? Having nothing to answer, they fly to the most absurd recels; That every thing is possible to God. But neither indeed can God do dirty things, nor wills he things contrary to nature; nor if thou shouldst desire, according to thy wretchedness, any thing abominable; could God do this? and ought it to be believed directly that it shall be? for God is not the patron of vicious appetite, nor of erroneous indecency, but of right and just nature. And he could indeed give eternal life to the soul; but carcases, says Heraclitus, are more fit to be thrown out than dung. Surely God neither would nor
could

could unreasonably exhibit the flesh eternal, full of things not fit to be mentioned : for he is the reason of all beings ; he can therefore work nothing unreasonable nor against himself.

The Jews then beginning a proper nation, and making laws according to the country, and observing these diligently yet now amongst themselves, and keeping a religion such as they ought, seeing it is that of their country, do like things to other men ; because all of them follow the customs of their country, however it be. Now, it appears so also to be useful, not only because it came into mind to different persons to make laws differently, and the things publicly enacted ought to be kept ; but also, because, it seems, the different parts of the earth, having from the beginning been distributed to different inspectors, and divided according to certain limits of jurisdiction, by that same are also separately inhabited. And certainly the things done by this with each of them, would be rightly practised, where it pleased those ; but it would not be holy to dissolve the laws enacted from the beginning in respect of places.

But in the second place, I will now ask these, whence they came ? Or what law of the country have they leading them ? They will say none. Truly they themselves both proceeded from thence, and bring their teacher and prelate from no where else. But yet they have made defection from the Jews.

One might use for this a witness, Herodotus saying thus : For truly the inhabitants of the city Marea and Apis of Egypt, on the confines of Lybia, they thinking to be Lybians and not Egyptians, and not being able to endure the religion, desiring not to be restrained from cows, sent to Ammon, saying, There was nothing common to them and the Egyptians : for they dwelt without the Delta, and did not consent to them, and they desired it might be lawful for themselves to eat without restriction. But the god did not suffer them to do so, saying, That is Egypt which is watered by the Nile, and the Egyptians are those, who, dwelling below the Elephantine city, drink of that river. Herodotus narrates these things. But Ammon is nothing worse for administering the affairs of demons, than the angels of the Jews : so that it is far from being unjust, that each people should religiously observe their own institutions. To be sure we shall find the greatest difference of

these according to the nations; and yet they think each of them that they especially have good laws; the Egyptians inhabiting Meroë, worshipping Jupiter and Bacchus only; but the Arabians Ourania and Bacchus, these alone; and all the Egyptians indeed both Osiris and Isis; but the Saitæ, Minerva; but the Naucratis not long ago have named Serapis; and the rest according to the provinces, so each of them. And some abstain from sheep, reverencing them as sacred, some from goats, some from crocodiles, some from cows; but they abstain from swine, abominating them. To the Scythians truly it is comely to feast even upon men. Yea there are some of the Indians, who, even eating their fathers, think they are doing funeral piety; and Herodotus himself somewhere says it. But I will again use his own words, for the sake of belief. Now, this he narrates. For if any would propose to all men, bidding them chuse the best laws out of all the laws; having looked through them, certainly each of them would chuse their own; so much do every one of them think their own laws to be the best. It is not indeed likely, that any other than a madman would set such things to the ridicule. But that all men think in this manner concerning the laws, with many and other evidences, this also may now be considered. Darius having called the Greeks that were in his dominion, asked, for what reward would they eat their dead fathers? But they said, they would not do it for any thing: but Darius after this having called the Indians, named *Callatians*, who eat their parents, asked, (the Greeks being present, and learning the things said by an interpreter), for what reward would they admit the burning of their defunct fathers with fire? But they being greatly astonished, bade give them good words. So indeed now these things are in custom. And Pindar seems to me to do rightly, saying, that the law is the king of all. If truly, according to these things, the Jews would diligently observe their own law, this were not blameable in them, but rather in those who leave their own things, and pretend to those of the Jews. But if, as knowing something more wise, they boast and turn away from the communion of others not equally pure; they have already heard, that they do not say a peculiar opinion concerning heaven; but, that I may pass all, what was held of old also by the Persians, as Herodotus likewise somewhere shews. For he says, It is their custom, going up to the greatest heights of mountains,

mountains, to make sacrifices to Jupiter; calling all the circle of heaven, Jupiter. I reckon then it differs nothing to call the Most High, Diespiter, or Jupiter, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Ammon, (as the Egyptians), or Pappai, (as the Scythians). Neither truly, according to these, would they be holier than others, that they are circumcised; for so were the Egyptians and Colchians before: nor that they abstain from swine; for so likewise the Egyptians, and further from goats, and sheep, and oxen, and fishes; and Pythagoras and his disciples from beans and all animals. Neither indeed is it at all like, that they are well esteemed with God, and beloved any thing differently from others, and that angels should be sent from thence to them alone, as indeed having obtained some region of the blessed: for we see both them and their region, of what things they should be worthy. Let that company therefore go bearing the just punishment of vain boasting; not knowing the great God, but seduced and deceived by the magic of Moses, and having learned that, not to a good end.

And indeed let us pass by whatsoever things are confuted concerning the teacher, and let him be thought of as truly some angel; but whether came he first and alone, or others also before? If they would say alone, they would then be convicted speaking falsely things contrary to themselves: for they say that others also came often, yea, and together sixty or seventy, who truly became evil, and were punished with chains, being cast down below in the earth, from whence also their tears are warm fountains; and that indeed there came also to his own sepulchre an angel, some say one and others two, answering the women, that he was risen, (for the child of God, it seems, was not able to open the sepulchre, but needed another to remove the stone); further, an angel came also to the carpenter for Mary's being pregnant; and for the infant's being snatched away to fly, another angel; and what need exactly to speak of all, and enumerate those said to be sent, both to Moses and to others of them? But he alone is not storied to have come among the human kind, as also they, who, by the pretence of the name of the doctrine of Jesus, have turned away from the maker of the world, as from the lesser, and have come, as to a greater, unto a certain God and Father of him that came, say, that also before him there came some from the maker of the world to mankind.

Is not then the same God both to the Jews and to them?

those who are of the great church, manifestly confessing this, and admitting as true, the things of that generation of the world adduced by the Jews concerning the six days and the seventh. They say, that the first man is the same as also the Jews say, and draw the genealogy of succession from him, just as they. And they tell the same story with the Jews, of the conspiracies of brethren against one another, and of the going down to Egypt, and the flight from thence. Let none think me ignorant, that some of them indeed consent, that they have the same God with the Jews; but some, another, to whom he is contrary, and that the Son came from him; and a third kind of them that name, some the natural, and the rest the spiritual, and some professing to be Gnostics, and some receiving Jesus, so for this boasting themselves Christians, but yet willing to live according to the law of the Jews, as the multitude of the Jews; and some are Sybillists; I know also some Simonians worshipping Helena, or a teacher Helenus; and the Marcellianites from Marcellina, and Harpocratians from Salome, and others from Mariamne, and others from Martha, and the Marcionites having Marcion for their leader; some one teacher and demon and some another, wickedly erring and turning about in much darkness, more unlawfully and more filthily than the companions of Antinous in Egypt. And these reproach one another with the most grievous things to be uttered and not to be uttered. And they would not yield, not in any respect to unanimity, being utterly disaffected to one another. Some are named by Christians, feared of the ear, some are called Riddles. But you will hear all these, who differ so much and confute their own selves most shamefully by contentions, saying this, The world is crucified to me, and I to the world.

S E C T. II. From Origen, book VI.

THose Christians who have made progress in learning, say, that they know more than the Jews. Come then, though they have no principle of their opinion, let us examine the doctrine itself. Now, we must first speak of such things as they have corrupted, misunderstanding them through stupidity; foolishly in the beginnings directly boasting themselves of things they do not understand: and they are these —

These

These things are better said by the Greeks, and without that commination and denunciation from God or the Son of God. Plato says in some of his epistles, The first good is altogether inexpressible, but by having much familiarity about that matter, and by living with it, suddenly as from flaming fire, light being kindled in the soul, it now nourishes itself: and in the same epistle, If it appeared to me that these things, both written sufficiently and spoken, are for the multitude, how could we be better employed in life than to write what is of great benefit to men, and bring forth nature to light unto all?

Plato's writings declare, that the Good is known to few. There are many, with wrong placed contempt, being filled with a high and not solid hope, as having learned some grand things, that say some things as true; because Plato, who had said these things before, does not withal speak of prodigies, nor silence those who would inquire what it is that is proposed, nor does he of himself require beforehand to believe, that such is God, and he has such a Son, and he descending hath discoursed with me. Plato speaks in this manner. It has come into my mind, yet to speak at greater length of these things: for perhaps if I speak of them, somewhat of the things said would be more manifest. For there is a certain true reason, contrary to any that dared to write of such things, and which therefore has been often and before spoke of by me, but it seems that it should now also be said. There are three that belong to each of these things by which it is necessary to acquire science, and itself is the fourth; but that must be placed the fifth, which indeed is knowable and also true, of which one is the name, and the second the reason, and the third the image, and the fourth science.

You see how Plato, though he had asserted, that it cannot be explained, at the same time, that he may not seem to retreat to inconvincibility, gives a reason of that difficulty: for perhaps not one thing may be explicable. Plato does not vaunt and lie, saying, that he has found some new thing, or that he is come sent from heaven, but confesses from whence these things are. But they say, Believe him whom I set forth to you, that he is the Son of God, though he was bound most ignominiously, or punished most shamefully, though yesterday and the day before, in the eyes of all, treated most reproachfully; yea, believe the rather for this.

If

If some set forth him, and others another, and yet this be common to all and at hand, Believe if you will be saved, or be gone; what shall they do who are truly willing to be saved? Are they throwing the dice, to divine where they should turn, and to whom they should join? They say, the wisdom that is in men is foolishness with God. The cause of this was told long before, viz. that they would by this saying draw to them only the unlearned and foolish. But this also was taken from the wise Greeks, who said, That human wisdom is one thing, and the divine another. Heraclitus says, For the human practice hath not maxims, but the divine has. And again, A foolish man hearkens to a demon, like as a boy to a man. And Socrates in Plato's apology: For I, O Athenian men, for nothing else than for wisdom have obtained this name; but what sort of wisdom is this? It is like, it is indeed human wisdom: for in very deed according to this I appear to be wise.

These impostors fly precipitantly from the more polite as not ready to be deceived, but they ensnare the more rustic. Their humility comes of a misunderstanding of Plato's words, who says somewhere in the laws; Truly God, according to ancient word, holding the beginning, and the end, and the middle of all beings, perfects rectitude according to nature, pervading all round: but he is always followed by justice, the punisher of them that forsake the divine law. He truly that will be happy, cleaving to her, follows humble and modest. That it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, is manifestly said from Plato, by Jesus corrupting this saying of Plato, That it is impossible for one who is egregiously good to be also egregiously rich.

Plato says, All things are about the king of all, and all things are for his sake; and this is the cause of all good things; but the second about second things, and the third about the third things. The human soul therefore desires to learn about these things, of what sort they are, looking to the things that are akin to her, of which she comprehends nothing fully. Surely there is nothing such concerning the king, and these things I said. Some Christians, misunderstanding the sayings of Plato, boast of a super-celestial God transcending the heaven of the Jews.

The way for souls to the earth and from the earth, according to Plato, is through the planets. The doctrine of the

the Persians also obscurely signifies the same, and with them is the mystery of Mithra: for in it there is a certain symbol of two revolutions, which are in heaven, both that for the fixed stars, and that again which is for the planets; and of the passage of the soul through these. Now, such is the symbol; A ladder highly ported, and over it the eighth port; the first of the ports of lead; the second of tin; the third of brass; the fourth of iron; the fifth of mixed money; the sixth of silver; but the seventh of gold. They put the first for Saturn, by the lead signifying the slowness of that star; the second for Venus, transferring to her the splendor and softness of the tin; the third for Jupiter, stable and firm; the fourth for Mercury, for patient of all works, and a maker of money, and celebrated, is both iron and Mercury; the fifth for Mars, from the mixture irregular and various; the sixth for the moon, the silver; the seventh for the sun, the gold; imitating their colours. And there is also some instruction concerning music in this symbol.

One that would examine a certain mystery of Christians, together with the foresaid mystery of the Persians, comparing them one with another, and laying open also the things of the Christians, should so see the difference of them. They have a figure, in which were drawn ten circles included by one another, but encompassed by one circle, which is said to be the soul of all, and is named Leviathan. This figure is divided by a black thick draught, and that is called Gehenna, which is also Tartarus. They have mutual voices about a seal, as of one putting about the seal, called Father; and of one sealed, called New and Son, and answering, I am anointed with white oil from the tree of life. Then also a number called, by angels delivering the seal, seven, on each side set over the soul departing from the body, some indeed of light, but the rest named *Principals*, and the prince of those named *Principals*, is called the *Execrated God*.

The God of the Jews raining and thundering, and the maker of this world, the God of Moses, and the world-making which is according to him, is worthy even of the curse, according to those who think so concerning him, because he cursed the serpent, who introduced the knowledge of good and evil to the first men. What would be more foolish or more mad than this stupid wisdom? For wherein did the lawgiver of the Jews err? And how do you take his cosmogony or the law of the Jews to yourself,

self, as you say, by a certain typical allegory? But against your will, O most impious, you praise the maker of the world, promising them all things, promising increase of their kind to the ends of the earth, and the resurrection from the dead with the same flesh and blood, and inspiring the prophets! And again you revile him! But when indeed you are forced by these, you profess to worship that same God; yet, when your teacher Jesus gives contrary laws to what Moses gave the Jews, you seek another God against him, even the Father. Of the foresaid seven ruling demons, the first is formed to the idea of a lion, the second is a bull, the third a certain amphibious and hissing horribly, the fourth has the form of an eagle, the fifth has the face of a bear, the sixth is described by them to have the face of a dog, the seventh has the face of an ass, and is named Thaphabaoth or Onoel. There are some coming again into the principal forms, so that some animate lions, others bulls, and others dragons, or eagles, or bears, or dogs. And there is a quadrangular figure at the gates of Paradise. But they yet heap things upon other things, the words of prophets, and circles upon circles, and oillowings of the church on earth, and of the circumcision, and the flowing power of a certain swift virgin, and a living soul, and heaven killed that it might live, and the earth killed with a sword, and many killed that they might live, and death ceasing in the world, when the sin of the world shall die, and again a strait descent, and gates opening of their own accord. But every where there is the tree of life, and the resurrection of the flesh from the tree; because, I suppose, their teacher was nailed to a cross, and was a carpenter to his trade; who, if he had happened to be thrown from a precipice, or cast into a gulf, or strangled with a rope, or a leather-cutter, or stone-polisher, or worker of iron; there would have been above the heavens, the precipice of life, or gulf of resurrection, or rope of immortality; or there is the blessed stone, or iron of love, or holy skin. Is there any old wife, telling a fable to sooth a child, that would not be ashamed to whisper such things?

But this is not the least wonder of them: for they set forth certain inscriptions in midst of the above supercelestial circles, besides others, these two, a greater and a lesser of a Son and of a Father. They who use a certain magic and incantation, and who call such barbarous names of certain demons, do the like to those, who, to them that

are subject to them, speak religious words for them who know not that the names are different with the Greeks, and with the Scythians, as Herodotus tells, the Scythians call Apollo Oitofyrus, and Neptune Thamimafades, and Venus Artimpasa, and Vesta Tabiti. What need I enumerate how many have taught lustrations or expiatory songs, or ill-averting voices or noises, or happy vestments of sensible things, or of numbers, or of stones, or of plants, or of roots, and in sum, of every kind of things that may be used, all manner of amulets? I have seen with some presbyters who are of their opinion, barbarous books having names of demons and prodigious words. Certainly these presbyters of their opinion promise nothing beneficial, but all things for the hurt of men. One Dionysius, an Egyptian musician of my acquaintance, said of those that deal in magic, that it avails indeed to the unlearned, and to them that are of corrupt manners; but to them that philosophize it can have no such effect, seeing they are provided of a sound regulation of life.

They are deceived most impiously, and by the greatest ignorance that likely errs from the divine riddles, making one contrary to God, naming him the devil, and in the Hebrew tongue Satan. It is rash, therefore wholly mortal — and not holy, to say these things, that the great God truly, being willing to do any good to men, hath one working against him, and is not able: the child of God then is put to the worse by the devil, and being punished by him, teaches us also to despise punishments, foretelling that Satan himself also in like manner appearing shall shew great works and wonders, usurping to himself the glory of God, to which they must not give heed, who would avoid him, but believe himself alone. These indeed belong manifestly to a man that is an impostor setting to work, and beforehand guarding against them that maintain the contrary opinion, and are the opposite gatherers of the mob. The ancients set forth as a riddle, a certain divine war, as Heraclitus saying this, But if it should be said that war is common and customary, even all things are, and are used according to contention: but Pherecydes being much more ancient than Heraclitus, setting in order a fabulous army against another, also gives Saturn the commander of the one, and Ophioneus of the other, narrates their provocations and battles, and that pactions were made by them, that whichever of them should fall into the ocean, these

should be the vanquished ; but they that drove them out and overcame them, these should hold heaven. The same meaning have also the mysteries concerning the Titans and giants reported to fight with God ; and these things with the Egyptians concerning Typhon, and Horus, and Osiris. These are the things misunderstood by them. Are not these like the things concerning a devil, a demon, or (which is more true), a man an impostor maintaining a contrary opinion ? Homer also may be so understood as saying like things to Heraclitus and Pherecydes, and to them who bring in the mysteries of the Titans and giants, in these words of Vulcan speaking a riddle to Juno ;

*For me ere now, once aiming aid to shew,
Caught by the foot, from heaven's high porch he threw.*

And these of Jupiter to Juno thus :

*Hast thou forgot ? when thou didst hang on high,
And to thy feet two anvils I did tie,
Thy hands with golden chain past yielding strong
I bound ; and thus in air and clouds you hung.
The gods through wide Olympus then did rage,
Yet, crowding round, thee could not disengage.
I, whom I seiz'd, did from the threshold hurl,
Till earth they reach'd scarce breathing with the whirl:*

These words of Jupiter to Juno are the words of God to matter ; now, the words to matter obscurely signify, that God, from the beginning, finding it vitiously disposed, bound it together by certain proportions, and adorned it ; and that the demons which were about it, as many as were hurtful, these he threw away, punishing them, the way hither. Pherecydes thus understanding these verses of Homer, said this : Below that portion is the Tartarian portion, and the daughters of Boreas, Harpies and Thyella keep it ; when any of the gods is injurious, Jupiter casts them out thither. And such sentiments also hath the brodered figured cloth about Minerva, in the pomp of Panathenians seen by all ; for by it is manifested, that a certain demon, without a mother and unpolluted, quells the audacious sons of earth.

But they say, that the Son of God is punished by the devil, and he punishes them, so that, being punished by him, they become hardy. And these things are altogether ridiculous : for I think the devil ought to be punished ;
but

but the men that are calumniated by him, ought not to be threatened.

But I signify whence this came to them, to call the Son of God: ancient men called the very world as made of God both his child and God. Altogether like certainly is this and that child of God.

The generation of the world described by Moses is very foolish, and the generation of men. They who have left their scriptures, not knowing what is the nature of the world and of men, have composed a profound idle tale. Some of the days of that world-making were passed before light and heaven was made, and the sun, and moon, and stars, and some passed after the making of these. — For certainly the maker of the world did not borrow light from above, even as they that kindle lamps among neighbours. If there was opposite to the great God a certain execrated god, who was doing these things against his mind, why did he lend him light? But concerning the making and corruption of the world, whether as unmade and incorruptible, or as made indeed but incorruptible, or as the reverse, I say nothing about this at present. They say, the spirit of the God over all intruded upon the works of another, and that he prayed destruction, some things being wickedly contrived, as by another world-maker beside the great God, against his Spirit, the God above bearing this; and that the great God, having given his spirit to the world-maker, asked it again. What god gives any thing so as to ask it again? for asking again is proper to him that needs; but God needs nothing. For what, when he lent, was he ignorant that he was lending to him that was evil? Why overlooks he the evil world-maker working against himself? Why does he secretly send and destroy his works? Why does he break in privily, and suborn and deceive? Why does he entice the souls of them that are condemned and accursed by him, and after the manner of some man-stealer draw them away? Why does he teach them to run away from their Lord? why to fly their Father? Why adopts he them without the Father's consent? Why promises he to be Father of aliens? A solemn God truly; desiring to be Father of sinners condemned by another, and of exiles, and, as they say, of excrements; and not able to take and punish him whom he indeed sent, who had withdrawn himself!

But if these are his works, how does God make evils?

F f 2

And

And how is he not able to persuade and admonish? How does he repent over them, becoming ungrateful and wicked, and despise and hate his own workmanship, and threaten and destroy his proper progeny? Or whether at length does he withdraw, whom he made, from this same world?

But this is extremely foolish also, to attribute some days to the making of the world, before there were days: for how were there days, the heaven being no way made, nor the earth any way established, nor the sun any where brought hither?

Yet returning, let us consider how the first and greatest God would not be absurd, commanding, Let this be, and another, This or that; and one day framing such a thing, the second day again so much more, and the third, and fourth, and fifth, and sixth, and resting the seventh day; plainly like some ill workman being wearied out, and needing relaxation for rest. It is neither just that the first God should be weary, nor work with his hands, nor give orders, nor has he a mouth, nor a voice, nor has he any other of these things which they know; nor did he make man his image: for God is not such, nor is he like to any other similitude. What sort of thing is it to think, that what is according to the image of God, is in that part of compounded man, which is worse, that is to say, the body? God partakes not of figure or colour, but neither partakes he of motion, nor does God partake of substance. All things are of him; neither is God comprehensible by reason; nor is he nameable: for he suffers nothing that can be apprehended by a name.

How then, may some say, shall I know God? and shall I learn the way to him? And how do you shew him to me, as now you cast darkness before my eyes, and I see nothing clearly? Those whom one should bring forth of darkness into splendid light, not being able to bear the bright rays, would be punished in the sight, and hurt, and think to be blind.

But Christians would give these questions, How shall we think to know God? and, How shall we be saved with him? this answer; Because God is great and hard to be beheld, he, throwing his own spirit into a body like us, hath sent him hither, that so we might be able to hear from him and learn. When they say that God is spirit, they differ nothing in that from the Stoics among the Greeks, saying,

saying, That God is the spirit pervading all things, and comprehending all things in himself.

Seeing the Son is spirit from God, born in a human body, the Son of God himself would not be immortal: for there is no such nature of spirit as to endure always, as it is not the nature of fire to continue for ever. Then it would be necessary for God to take breath; and the consequence from this is, that Jesus cannot rise with the body; for God would not receive up the spirit which he gave, being polluted with the nature of the body. But if he would send the spirit out of himself, what was the need to inspire it into the womb of a woman? For he could, already knowing to form men, frame a body to him also, and not throw his own spirit into so great pollution; so indeed he would not have been disbelieved, if he had been sown directly from above.

Whence should he be demonstrated the child of God, who suffered such punishments, if it had not been foretold concerning him?

There are two sons of God, one of the maker of the world, and the other of the God according to Marcion; and their single combats are like the divine fights of the quails and their fathers, or they being useless through old age and doting, do not indeed attack one another, but suffer their children to fight.

Seeing the divine spirit was in a body, it altogether behoved it somewhat to excel the rest in greatness, or beauty, or strength, or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence: for it is unaccountable that what had something divine more than others, should differ nothing from another; yet this differed nothing from another; but as ye say, was little, and hard favoured, and ignoble. Further, if God would, like Jupiter with the comedian, waking out of a long sleep, deliver mankind from evils, why at length did he send into one corner that spirit, as you say, when many bodies ought to have been inspired in like manner, and sent over the whole inhabited earth? But the comedian in the theatre making laughter, wrote that Jupiter being awakened sent Mercury to the Athenians and Lacedæmonians; yet you do not think it ridiculous to make the Son of God sent to the Jews. These were most divine nations from the beginning, the Chaldeans, the Magi, the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Indians; but the Jews, to whom he is sent, are presently to perish! He that knew all things

things did not understand that he sends his Son to evil men, and that would sin and punish him. But it is said by them in excuse, that these things had been long ago foretold.

S E C T. III. From Origen, book VII.

LET us see where they will find an excuse. They indeed who bring in another God, none; but they, who the same, will again say the same, this truly wise; that it behoved so to be; and the evidence; for the things were of old foretold.

The things that were foretold of Pythia or the Dodonean women, or Clarius, or in the oracle of the Branchidæ, or in that of Ammon, and by innumerable other prophets, by which the whole earth has been equitably inhabited, these are placed to no account; but the things said of those in Judea, after their manner, or not said, and as they about Phœnice and Palestine have used to this day, these truly are accounted wonderful and unalterable! There are many sorts of prophecies, but this is the most perfect with the men that are there.

Many, and of no name, easily, from any cause that happens, both in temples and without temples; some also gathering the croud, and intruding into cities or armies, are agitated, to wit, as they that prophesy; but it is at hand to each of them and their custom to say, I am God or the child of God, or divine Spirit, but I am come; for now the world perishes, and ye, O men, for unrighteousness are gone, but I will save, and ye shall see me again with heavenly power returning; blessed is he who now worships me, for upon all others I will cast eternal fire, and on cities and countries. And the men who knew not their own punishments, shall repent in vain and groan; but them that believe me, I will preserve eternal. Setting off these things, they then add unknowable, and startling, and every way obscure things, of which no man of understanding could find the meaning: for they are dark and nothing; but to every fool or impostor they give occasion to apply what is said, to himself how he pleases. These prophets, to wit, of whom I myself was a hearer, being by me reprov'd, confessed to me wherein they were deficient, and forged, speaking backward and forward.

They who from the prophets make excuse concerning
the

the things of Christ, can indeed say nothing to the purpose, when any thing wicked, or shameful, or impure appears said of the Divinity or abominable. For what other was it to God to eat mutton and gall, or drink vinegar, than to eat turds?

Come then, if the prophets should have foretold, that the great God (to say no other thing more intolerable) would serve, or be sick, or die; it behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick, seeing it was foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is God! But prophets would never have foretold this: for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be considered whether it be foretold or not foretold, but if it be a work worthy of God and good. But for the shameful and evil, though all madmen should appear to foretell it, it is incredible. How then are the things holy that were done about him as about God? If these things were prophesied of the God over all, must then such things be believed of God, seeing they are foretold?

But this again they will not mind, if the prophets of the God of the Jews foretold that he would be his child; how indeed did he by Moses give law, to become rich and to become powerful, and to replenish the earth, and to cut off the enemies in war from the youth up, and to kill them every kind, which also he does in the eyes of the Jews, as Moses says; and if they should not obey these, he expressly threatens to treat them as enemies in war? But now his Son, the Nazarene man, gives opposite law, that there is no access to the Father for one making rich, or loving power, or striving for wisdom or glory; and that there must be no more care had, than have the crows, of provisions and the storehouse, and of raiment less than the lilies; and it must be permitted to him that strikes once, also to strike again. Whether does Moses or Jesus lie? Or did the Father sending him forget what things he discoursed to Moses? Or disapproving of his own laws, did he change his mind? and sends he the messenger to contrary purposes?—— They speak of God as being of the nature of body, and a body of human likeness.—— If they be asked, Whither will they go, and what hope have they? They will answer, To another earth better than this. Divine ancient men have given account of a happy life to happy souls, and some have named it, The islands of the blessed, others, The Elysian field, from their being loosed from evils, who are there, as also Homer,

Thee,

*Thee, to the Elysian field, and where extend
The bounds of earth, th' immortal gods will send ;
————— Where life most easy flows.*

But Plato thinking the soul immortal, manifestly calls that place where it is sent the earth; saying, that it is every way large, and that we who are from Phasis to the Pillars of Hercules dwell in a certain little spot like ants about a hollow place, or frogs dwelling about the sea; and many others elsewhere dwell in many other such places: for there are every where about the earth many cavities, and of every kind both as to form and bulk, into which the water, and the darkness, and the air flow together; but the earth itself lies pure in the pure heaven. But what is shewed by these is not easy for every one to know, unless any were able to hear what is this that he says; for weakness and slowness it is not possible to penetrate to the utmost air; and if nature were sufficient to bear contemplating, it would then know, that this is truly heaven and the true light. — The things they say of the resurrection are from their misunderstanding the transmigration. — Surely when they are every way repressed and confuted, again, as having heard nothing, they return to the same question, How then shall we know and see God? and how shall we come to him? They expect with eyes of the body to see God, and with ears to hear his voice, and with sensible hands to handle him. They that in this manner seek God, should go to the oracle of Trophonius, and to that of Amphiareos, and to that of Mopsus, where are beheld gods of human likeness, and not lying, but even manifest: because one will see, not once slipping by, like him that deceived them, but always conversing familiarly with them that will.

But they will also say again, How shall they know God not apprehending him by sense? What can possibly be learned without sense? The voice indeed not of man, nor of the soul, but of the flesh! But yet then let them hear, if they can even hear any thing, as a fearful and body-loving generation; if, winking with sense, you would look up with the mind, and turning away the eye of the flesh, you would raise up that of the soul; only thus shall you see God. And if ye seek a leader of this way, you must fly from impostors, and jugglers, and such as court idols for you, that ye may not be altogether ridiculous, blaspheming others,

others, demonstrated to be gods, as idols; but worshipping him who is truly more miserable than idols themselves, and not yet an idol, but verily dead, and seeking a Father like unto him.

Truly for such deceit, and these wonderful counsellors, and the demoniac words to the lion, and the amphibious, and the likeness of an ass, and the others, and to the prophetic porters, whose names miserably learning, wretched ye are tortured and crucified. But follow divinely-inspired poets, and the wise, and philosophers, and they will lead you.

Follow Plato, who is a more effectual teacher of the matters of theology. He says, "It is indeed then a labour to find, and impossible for one that finds to declare unto all the Maker and Father of this universe." You see how the way of truth is sought by prophets, and how Plato knew that it is impossible for every one to go in it. But since, for the sake of this, it is found out by wise men, that so we might get some perception of the unnameable, and first, manifesting him, either by the composition which is into other things, or by resolution from these, or willing to teach, by proportion, what is otherwise inexpressible; I would wonder if ye could follow, altogether bound up by flesh, and seeing nothing pure.

Substance and generation, — intelligible, — visible: — with substance, truth, — but with generation, error. — About truth then science; — but about either, opinion. — And understanding is of the intelligible, — but sight of the visible: — for the mind knows the intelligible, but the eye the visible; what therefore, in the visibles, is the sun, being neither eye nor sight; but to the eye the cause of seeing; to the sight, of consisting by him; and to visibles, of being seen; to all sensibles, of being; and not he, to himself, of being seen; that, in the intelligibles is he, who is neither mind nor understanding, nor science; but to the mind the cause of understanding; and to the understanding, of being by him; and to science, of knowing by him, and to all intelligibles, and to the truth itself, and to substance itself, of being beyond all things; he being intelligible by a certain ineffable power.

These things are said by men having understanding. But if ye also understand any thing of these, it holds in us. And if ye think of any spirit descending from God to tell forth divine things, this would be the spirit that preaches these things; of whom ancient men being indeed filled,

have told many and good things, which if ye cannot hear, hold your peace, and hide your own ignorance, and do not say, that those are blind who see, and that those are lame who run; being yourselves wholly lamed in your souls and mutilated, and living to body, that is, to a dead one.

How much better would it have been for you, since ye desired to make some innovation, to study concerning some other of them who died nobly, and are capable to admit of a divine fable? Come, if Hercules did not please, and Æsculapius, and those who were of old glorified; ye had Orpheus, a man that, without controversy, received the holy spirit to be used, and him violently dead; but yet perhaps he was pre-occupied by others; at least Anaxarchus, who being cast into a mortar, and most unconscionably pounded, very well despised the punishment, saying, Bray, bray the husk of Anaxarchus, for you bray not him: the voice of some truly divine spirit! But some naturalists also preventing have followed him: Had ye not then Epictetus? who, when his master was twisting his leg, smiling composedly said, You will break it; and when he had broke it, said, Did not I say you would break it? But what did your God utter like this when he was punished? Ye also might have more likely set up as the child of God, the Sybil whom some of you use; but now ye could indeed insert rashly many and blasphemous verses into hers, but place him God, who had indeed a most infamous life, but a most pitiful death. How much more fit for you, than him, was Jonas under the gourd, or Daniel who escaped from the wild beasts, or they that are yet more marvellous than these!

They have also such a precept, not to repel him that injures, and if he should strike, says he, the one cheek, yet offer thou also the other. This also is ancient, very well said before, but it is more rudely commemorated. For Socrates also is introduced by Plato discoursing with Crito these things:

“ Must then an injury in no wise be done? No certainly.
 “ ly. Nor must the injured repay the injury, as many
 “ think, seeing an injury must in no wise be done? It
 “ does not appear. But, what, should hurt be done, Crito,
 “ to, or not? Certain it ought not, Socrates. But what,
 “ should he that suffers hurt, repay the hurt, as many say;
 “ is it just or unjust? In no wise: for hurting men differs
 “ nothing from injuring. You say truly: neither then ought
 “ injury

“ injury to be done, nor any of men be hurt, nor, what-
 “ ever be suffered from them.”

These things says Plato, and again these: “ Observe
 “ thou also then very well, whether thou partakeſt, and it
 “ appear together to thee. And let us begin from hence,
 “ conſulting, as never being right neither to injure nor to
 “ repay an injury, nor for the harmed to repel them that
 “ repay harm or turn away. And partakeſt thou not of
 “ this principle? For indeed both long ago and yet now it
 “ appears ſo to me.” So then indeed it ſeemed good to
 Plato, but theſe things appeared alſo yet before to divine
 men. But concerning theſe and other things as many as
 they corrupt, let the things ſaid ſuffice, and any that de-
 ſires to inquire further into any of theſe, ſhall know. But
 let us ſtand from thence.

They do not bear to ſee temples, and altars, and ſtatues ;
 for neither do the Scythians bear this, nor the Nomades of
 the Libyans, nor theſe Atheiſts the Seres, nor other nations
 that are the moſt unholy, and the moſt lawleſs. But that
 the Perſians alſo ſo profeſs, Herodotus tells in theſe words :
 “ But I have known the Perſians uſing theſe laws ; they
 “ do not dedicate ſtatues, and altars, and temples, but they
 “ alſo impute folly to them that do ; as it appears to me ;
 “ becauſe they eſteem not the gods to be ſprung of men,
 “ as do the Greeks.” But Heraclitus alſo declares ſo :
 “ And they pray to theſe ſtatues like as if one would talk
 “ to houſes, neither knowing gods nor heroes, who they
 “ are.” What then do they teach us, that is more wiſe
 than Heraclitus? He indeed very expreſſly ſignifies, that
 “ it is fooliſh to pray to ſtatues, if one know not gods and
 “ heroes who they are.” Thus Heraclitus. But they ma-
 niſteſtly contemn the ſtatues : if indeed, becauſe ſtone, or
 wood, or braſs, or gold, which this one or that one hath
 wrought, would not be God ; ridiculous wiſdom ! For what
 other than a mere fool would eſteem theſe gods? but the
 conſecrated gifts and ſtatues of gods. But, if becauſe it is
 not to be thought, that they are divine images ; for the
 form of God is different, as appears alſo to the Perſians ;
 they have forgot conſuting their own ſelves, when they
 ſay, that God made man his own image, and the form like
 himſelf.

But they will conſent indeed that theſe are a form to
 the honour of ſome, that are either like or unlike ; yet
 that they are not gods, to whom theſe are applied, but de-

mons, and that whosoever worships God ought not to serve demons. Truly they are manifestly convicted that they worship not God, but neither demons, but one that is dead.

S E C T. IV. From Origen, book VIII.

BUT first I will ask, for what are not demons to be served? Are not all things dispensed according to the mind of God, and every providence from himself? And whatsoever work be in the whole, either of God or of angels, or of other demons, or of heroes, all these things have law from the greatest God; but whoever was worthy was set over each, receiving power. Does not the worshipper of God, therefore, justly serve him who hath thence obtained authority? For it is not possible, say they, that the same one should serve many lords.

But this is the voice of the sedition of those that inclose themselves, and that break off from the rest of men. They that say this, as much as in them is, translate their own passion to God. Wherefore also it hath indeed place amongst men, that he who serves any man should not unreasonably also serve another, as the other is hurt by the different service; nor should he that happens to be associated by oath with one, be so associated with another, as hurting, it hath reason, not to serve together different heroes and such demons; but in respect of God, to whom neither any hurt nor grief appears, it is unreasonable to shun, like these concerning men and heroes and such demons, serving many gods.

And he that serves many gods, serves one of those that belong to the great God, and in this does a friendly thing to him. It is not lawful to honour any to whom that is not given from him: wherefore any that honours and worships all that are his, grieves not God whose they all are. And indeed he who says, that one is called Lord, speaking of God, does impiously, dividing the kingdom of God, and making sedition as if there were a faction, and there were some other head of the sedition against him.

If truly these served no other but one God, they would perhaps have some strong reason against others; but now they worship excessively him that lately appeared, and without think that nothing is done wickedly about God, if also
his

his servant be served. If you should teach them that this is not his child, but that he is indeed the Father of all, who alone truly ought to be worshipped, they yet would not without him also, who is their leader of sedition. And truly they have called him the Son of God; not because they worship God exceedingly, but because they magnify him exceedingly. But that I think not these things beside the scope, I will use their own voices: for somewhere in that heavenly dialogue, they say in so many words, "If the Son of God is stronger, and the son of man is his lord, and who other shall lord over the ruling God? How are many about the pit, and none into the pit? For what, having made so much way are you afraid? You forget; for I have courage and a sword."

Thus, this is not what they propose: for they substitute another supercelestial God his Father, concerning whom they have consented to worship; that, under pretence of the great God, they may worship him alone, whom they set up the Son of man, whom they declare stronger and lord of the ruling God. Hence they have this commandment not to serve two lords, that sedition about this one might be guarded against.

They flee from dedicating altars, and statues, and temples, seeing it is to them the faithful token of hidden and secret communion.

Certainly God is common to all, good and standing in need of nothing, and without envy; what then hinders them who are especially consecrated to him, to partake of the public festivals? If these idols be nothing, what is grievous in partaking of the solemn feast? But if they are some demons, doubtless these also belong to God, who are also to be believed in and sacrificed to according to the laws, and prayed to that they may be benevolent. If truly according to some custom of their country they abstain from some such victims, they should also wholly abstain from the eating of all animals; which is likewise the opinion of Pythagoras, honouring the soul and its organs; but if (what they say) that they may not eat with demons, I pronounce them blessed for wisdom, because they slowly perceive themselves to be always eating with demons, and then indeed only guard against this, when they see the victim sacrificed. But whenever they eat bread, and drink wine, and taste the fruits of trees, and draw in the very water and the very air with their breath; do they not certainly

tainly receive each of these from some demons, to each of whom the care is in particular committed?

Either, therefore, there is no living any where any way, nor coming hither, or he that comes into life on these terms, must give thanks to the demons that are set over the earth, and offer first-fruits and prayers while we live, that so we may have them lovers of men. Could a lieutenant and president of the king of the Persians, or Romans, or general, or procurator, and further they that have lesser governments, or cares, or ministries, being neglected do much hurt; but the governors and ministers, in the air, and upon the earth, would do little hurt if they were injured? — If truly any name them barbarously, they will have power, but in Greek and Roman manner, not yet. —

The Christians say, Behold, I, standing by the statue of Jupiter or Apollo, or whatever god at any time, reproach and strike, and he does not at all repel me. Dost thou not behold then, O thou best, that any standing by thy own demon, not only reproaches, but also proclaims out of the whole earth and sea, and binding, leads away and crucifies thee, consecrated to him as a statue; and the demon, or (as thou sayest) the child of God doth not at all repel him? — The priest of Apollo or of Jupiter says, The mills of the gods grind late — and to childrens children, and who should be born afterward.

Thou indeed, railing, laughest at their statues, who, if thou hadst railed at Bacchus himself, or Hercules being present, thou wouldst not perhaps have been dismissed rejoicing; but they who stretched out and punished thy God being present, they who did these things suffered nothing. But neither after these things in so long a life, was there any new thing from him to any who might be believing that he was not a man an impostor, but the child of God. And he, to wit, that sent the Son for the sake of some statues, in such manner, withal, punished as to be destroyed together and the statues neglected, and so much time being past, is not turned again. What father is so impious? He indeed then was willing perhaps, as thou sayest, for this he was most injuriously treated. But those whom thou reproachest, I can indeed say, that they are willing. For it is best to add like to like. But they also very much repel the reproacher, who either flies for this and is hid, or is taken and destroyed.

What need to alledge how many things, this, prophets
and

and prophetesses, and that, others who were possessed, both men and women, have foretold from the oracles by a divinely-inspired voice; yea how many wonderful things have been heard from their innermost temples; yea how many things have been manifested from the victims and sacrifices to those consulting them; yea how many things from other marvelous symbols? yea to some evident apparitions have been exhibited.

All life is full of these. How many cities have been set in order from oracles, and freed from diseases and famines; and how many that neglected or forgot these, have perished miserably; yea how many have been sent into colony, and following the orders have become happy; how many rulers, yea how many private persons have been by this dismissed better or worse; how many, hardly bearing the want of children, have obtained their desires; how many have escaped the wrath of demons; how many have been healed of the mutilations of their bodies? On the other hand, how many that have violated the sacred things have been instantly seized? Some held there beside themselves thus, some declaring the things they had done; and some also not declaring the things they had done, and some making away with themselves; yea, some smitten with incurable diseases; yea, I have also known them destroyed by a grievous voice from their innermost temples.

Especially, O thou best, (who art forward in striving to death), as thou establishest eternal punishments, so also the interpreters of these sacred things, and they that initiate, and they who have the leading in religious rites, what punishments thou dost threaten to others, these threaten to thee: for it may be considered which of them are most true or most firm: for indeed each of them confirm to themselves by word equally concerning their own. But if evidences should be needed, these also shew many and manifest works, both of certain demoniac powers and of responses, and bringing them from oracles of all places.

But how are not these things of yours absurd? To desire and hope that this same body shall rise again, as there is nothing better for us nor more honourable; but again, to throw it into punishments, as dishonoured! But it is not fit to discourse this with them that believe this, and who melt with the body: for these are also otherwise rustic, and impure, and without reason diseased with sedition.

I will discourse this with those indeed who hope to have
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the soul or the mind eternal with God, whether they will call it spiritual or intelligent, spirit holy and blessed, or a living soul, or a supercelestial progeny of a divine and incorporeal nature and incorruptible, or however they rejoice to name it: indeed they establish this rightly, that they who have lived well shall be happy; but the unjust shall be wholly held with eternal evils: and may neither they, nor any other of men, at any time, go back from maintaining this opinion.

But seeing men are born connected with body, either for the sake of the œconomy of the whole, or bearing the punishments of sin, or that the soul is burdened by certain passions until it be purged in the appointed periods: for it must, according to Empedocles, thirty thousand times be made to wander from the blessed, being made, for the time, every form of mortals; it is credible therefore that it is delivered over to certain keepers of the same prison.

— Their purpose of dying is like the disposition of robbers suffering for robbery. —

Reason chuses either of two. If indeed they should disdain to serve seemly things, and them that are set over these, neither to come to manhood, nor to take a wife, nor to beget children, nor to do any other thing in life, but to remove hence wholly leaving no seed; so would such a kind be altogether desolated in the earth. But if they shall both take wives, and beget children, and taste fruits, and partake of the things in life; they shall also bear the appointed evils: for this is nature, that all men should have the experience of evils: for it is necessary that evils should be, nor have they another place. Certainly the convenient honours ought to be rendered to them to whom these things are committed, and the things becoming life ought to be served, until they be loosed from the bonds, lest they should appear also to be useless to these: for it is also unjust, that they who partake of the things which these have, should contribute nothing to them. Therefore they should be grateful to the demons that are here, and they owe them sacrifices of thanksgiving.

But that there is some to whom authority is given in things even to the least, one may learn from what the Egyptians say; that six and thirty demons, or some ethereal gods have distinguished the body of man, distributed into so many parts, but some also say many more are ordered to govern some one part of it, and some another: and they
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know the names of the demons in the language of the country, as Chnumen, and Knat, and Sikar, and Biu, and Eni, and Erebin, and Ramanor, and Rejanoor, and as many other as they name in their own tongue; and indeed they who call on them, are healed in the parts affected.

What therefore forbids one's courting both these and others by gifts, if one would be whole rather than be sick, and be happy rather than be unhappy, and be freed from places of torture and places of punishment, as they are reputed? Yet this is to be guarded against, lest any familiar with these should be melted with the service which is about these same things, and having loved the body, and being turned away from the better things, be held in forgetfulness of them. For probably wise men must not be disbelieved, who indeed say; for that the most part of terrestrial demons, being melted with generation, and strongly attached to blood, and knit to the steam of burning fat, and to melodies, and to some other such like things, could do nothing better than heal the body, and foretel future fortune to man and to city; and as many things as are about mortal practices, these they both know and can do. But it is rather to be thought, that the demons need nothing nor want any thing; but rejoice with those that do piety toward them.

God is not to be forsaken in any wise neither by day nor night, neither in public nor private, both in every word and work; but both with these and without, let the soul be always intent to God.

If this were the case, what is grievous in the rulers that are here being pleased, both others and the potentates and kings among men, as they were not possessed of these dignities here without demoniac power? Yet if any perhaps should command a worshipper of God, either to do impiously or to say any other filthy thing, it is not on any account to be obeyed, but, rather than these, all torments are to be endured, and all deaths suffered, before any thing unholy concerning God be, not only said, but even studied. But if one should command to praise the sun or Minerva, you ought to praise them most forwardly with a good poem; so indeed you shall appear the more to worship the great God, if you also celebrate these in hymns; for piety passing through all becomes more perfect.

And if any should command you to swear by a king a-

mong men, neither is this grievous: for the things on earth are given to him, and whatsoever you may receive in life, you receive from him.

The ancient man ought not to be disbelieved, saying this before of old, *There is one king to whom the child of crafty Saturn gave it.* So if you would loose this opinion, likely the king would repel you: for if all should do the same with you, nothing indeed would hinder him to be left alone and desolate, and the things on earth would become the possession of the most lawless and the most rustic barbarians; and neither of thy religion, nor of the true wisdom would the glory be yet left amongst men.

Surely you will not say this, That if the Romans, believing you, and neglecting the things established by law to them, both toward gods and men, should call upon your Most High, or whomsoever you will; he coming down would fight for them, and they would have need of no other strength. For even the same God, before having promised to them that cleaved to him, both these things and much greater than these, as you say; you see how much he has profited both them and you: to them indeed, in place of their being lords of the whole earth, there is neither left any such clod nor house; but if any of you wander still hiding, yet he is sought to the judgment of death.

Nor is this indeed at all to be borne, when you say, that if they who at present reign over us, persuaded by you, should be taken, you would persuade them that again reigned. But if they also should take others, and others upon others, until all persuaded by you should be taken; withal some principality, prudent and foreseeing what would happen, would utterly exterminate you all before its own destruction. For if it were indeed possible that they of Asia, and Europe, and Lybia, both Greeks and barbarians, distributed into the ends of the earth, could consent to one law! — He that thinks this knows nothing.

You ought to assist the king with all your strength, and labour with him just things, and fight for him, and go with him to war, if he urge also to command in the army with him; and you should likewise exercise the magistrate's office in your country, if this need to be done for the safety of the laws and of piety.

NOTES on the true Discourse of CELSUS.

[Written lately, and now first printed.]

On his Introduction.

N O T E I.

Page 195. *The judgment of death impending to them.*

Celsus wrote against the Christian religion after Marcion had published his heresy; for he mentions him and his followers, and reproaches Christians with that heresy: and Christians, when he wrote, were holding their meetings secretly, in the fear of death, wherewith they were punished when they could be apprehended; as appears from this and several other passages in his book; so that it behoved to be before the reign of Commodus, when the churches had rest. Therefore it would appear, that this philosopher wrote his book, the first, against Christianity, sometime betwixt *A. D.* 163 and 181, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, another philosopher, held in great esteem by some Christians now, on account of his book, wherein he writes thus of the Christians in his time*: “What sort of
“soul is that, which is ready now to be loosed from the
“body, if it be necessary, and either to be extinguished,
“or to be dissipated, or to abide? But this readiness—
“that it should come from special judgment, not according to fool-hardiness, as the Christians, but prudently,
“and decently, and, so as also to persuade another, not
“tragically.”

The philosopher did well to distinguish this readiness he here talks of, not only from that of Peregrinus, of which Lucian wrote, but especially from the forwardness of Christians in suffering death for their faith. The Christian revelation, bringing life and immortality to light, and giving everlasting consolation against death, could not furnish them with any thoughts, that such a judgment as this

* Τῶν εἰς θάνατον β. ὁλοῦν ια.

could proceed upon. The philosopher tells not how the special judgment should be formed that may produce this readiness in a soul. And what could he imagine that any human soul had to think upon, in forming the judgment that must produce this prudent, decent, and every way composed readiness, instantly to be or not to be, as well as to leave the body? Or what is in it to persuade another, so as many others were persuaded, observing how the persecuted Christians died; some even offering themselves to death with them? In place of its being the effect of thought and judgment, if such a thing as this readiness of indifferency, about dying and about being or not being after death, could take place in the human soul, it behoved it to be the consequent of no thought or judgment upon the matter at all. And so he says well, "What sort of soul is this?" A rare soul truly! not easily to be imagined, let be to be found out among the vast multitudes of souls that must all leave their bodies; at least we may say, the Christians souls were not of this sort, facing death as much without this great preparation, as men standing naked in battle-array.

The Christians were ready to die, it is true; but they were so when they ought to die, or it behoved them to leave their bodies: for Celsus represents them, not only as forward to die, but also as flying, and hiding, and assembling secretly about the business of their religion, to shun the death due to their profession, by the laws that were executed in the name and by the authority of this same virtuous and philosophical emperor. They found themselves obliged by the law of that Lord who, they believed, had brought life and immortality to light to them, and could destroy both soul and body in hell, to assemble themselves together in the confession of his name, forsaking the religions established by the laws of those lords who could only kill the body, and from whom they had nothing to hope for after death. And by the same law they were allowed to fly when persecuted, even as Celsus represents them doing. But when they were apprehended by their pursuers, it behoved them then to leave the body; and it was necessary for them to die, not only by the law of Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, but by his law whose authority was to them far greater, and who commanded them to die, after his own example, rather than deny, or seem to deny their faith. And then they were found, to the observation, not only of
Celsus,

Celsus, but even of this emperor, surprisingly, and, to them, some way unaccountably ready to die. Even the Stoic philosopher appears, in this same passage of his book, somewhat disturbed with this readiness of the Christians to be loosed from the body. And Celsus the Epicurean, or rather Platonic philosopher, talks of it in this manner, (p. 202.), "They that were with him while living, and heard his voice, and used him as their teacher, seeing him punished and dying, neither suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments; but they even denied that they were disciples. *Yet now ye die with him!* When he came, he drew no more than ten most profligate sailors and publicans; neither did he persuade all these. If living indeed he persuaded none, but, when he is dead, they that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd?" And (p. 239.) "O thou best, who art forward in striving to death—thou establishest eternal punishments." And (p. 239.) "But how are not these things of yours absurd? To desire and hope, that this same body shall rise again, as there is nothing better for us nor more honourable, but again to throw it into punishments as dishonoured!" And (p. 240.) "Their purpose of dying, is like the disposition of robbers suffering for robbery." He has recourse to this at last, though at first he was fain to compare their death to the death of Socrates, to ward off the force of the testimony it gave to the doctrine that produced it as extraordinary, and far excelling any instruction that had been amongst the nations before. Now, we may very well admit these two men as witnesses, after Pliny and Arrian, testifying the notour readiness of Christians in laying down their lives upon their faith: and indeed they testify the fact plainly; but to account for it, lay altogether out of the road of philosophers, for it was truly above nature.

However ready the Christians were to die, yet they were not prepared for it as the philosopher would have them.

Their souls were not at all ready to be extinguished, leaving their bodies, nor to be dispersed. For they died most firmly persuaded in this judgment, that they would abide.

Nor were they in readiness to abide in a worse situation than in the body they were leaving, or to abide in a miserable state; for their readiness came from their judgment concerning the fear of this at last, in case of their
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shunning present death by seeming to deny the faith; as it came at the same time from their judgment concerning the hope of a proper happiness for them upon the dissolution of the body: for they knew, that when they left the body, they would have a mansion in heaven, in the bodily presence of their Lord, beholding his glory, and sharing with him in the life he lives there; of which having some foretaste, in the joyful sense of the divine favour, by faith in him who suffered death for their offences, and rose again for their justification, they were confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with him.

Nor yet were they in readiness to abide always without this same body, from which they were now, when it was necessary, so ready to be loosed. For their readiness came from a judgment they formed upon his promise of coming again from heaven, raising them from the dead and changing their vile bodies, fashioning them like his glorified body, to live for ever with him, and with him to reign and to inherit all things, in the body. And being most firmly persuaded in this judgment, they were ready to leave this mortal corruptible body, hoping to meet with it again incorruptible and immortal. Thus Lucian, (*de morte Peregrini*), giving a more true account of them than the other philosophers, says, "These wretches have persuaded themselves, that they shall be in whole immortal, and live to eternity; wherefore also they contemn death, and many willingly deliver up themselves."

The philosopher, who gave no credit to those things that, being believed by Christians, made them so ready to die, was obliged to take notice of their extraordinary readiness, and to fortify himself against any impression it might make upon him, by thinking of it as some sort of madness, and by setting in opposition to it, a readiness to die that he imagined the soul might be furnished with from within itself by philosophising, a readiness to be instantly either extinguished, if of the nature of fire, or to be dissipated into air, if aerial, or to abide philosophising at freedom, being loosed from the body.

The opposition betwixt philosophy, and the word of faith that was preached by Jesus and his apostles, appears most manifestly in the case of death, but greatly to the advantage of the faith. Philosophy leading men to happiness, following nature, and avoiding the perturbations arising from unbridled passions, having rubbed through, as it could,

could, the various situations of life, when it comes to death, loses the scent, we see, and is altogether at fault; and being at a stand on the utmost verge of its sphere, can yield no happiness to any soul there, if there be not such a soul as can find it within itself, in its readiness, neither to be, nor not to be, nor how to be, but of indifferency to either. We may say with the philosopher, What sort of soul is that which is thus ready? or did ever any soul find itself happy in this same readiness?

Here where philosophy appeared so manifestly at a miserable stand, the faith, bringing life and immortality to light, offered itself as a guide to happiness. Multitudes followed it, and found themselves happy in death; dying with unspeakable joy in the certain prospect of that same supreme happiness, whereof they had presently the most comfortable foretaste. The philosophical emperor, in whose name and authority they were cruelly put to death, as the greatest hurt he could do them, for all his fine talk about following nature to death as no evil to be feared, and this learned philosopher Celsus, who could reproach them and their leader with being ignominiously put to death, both of them saw the experiment made, which they most inhumanly helped to make, the one with his sword, and the other with his pen, like true sons of him that was a murderer from the beginning, and a greater philosopher than any of them. When they made the experiment, they could not help seeing the fact come out, That the followers of the faith against philosophy, found themselves happy in death. Yet they would not humble themselves to follow that guide, nor lay aside their cruel spite and malice against it, but cleaved the closer to their philosophy, scorning the death of the persecuted Christians, and vainly boasting against them, in a more excellent readiness to die, whereof they imagined their great souls capable, but whereof neither they, nor any other soul of man, ever had, or can have any comfortable experience.

The philosophers, though they laboured hard to no effect, by their reasonings and imaginations, to find a cure for the great distress the human soul is subject to from the fear of death and dread of divine judgment, yet hardened themselves against the faith, the only remedy for this evil, by representing that amazing effect of it in the death of the Christian martyrs, as a peculiar kind of madness. Arrian (upon Epictetus, book 4. c. 7.) derives this disposition of the
Galileans

Galileans (as he calls them) toward death, from custom, and sorts it with madness; to which he opposes what he calls reason and demonstration disposing us, as parts of the universe, to die for the good of the whole, by teaching "the rational animal both that it is a part, and what sort of a part, and that it is comely for the parts to yield to the whole." And Pliny (epist. 97. book 10.) says, "It is not to be doubted, whatever it might be they confessed, that surely their stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished;" and he also called it madness. If such obstinacy as this had been the effect of philosophy, they would have extolled it as the highest virtue. But as it came from the faith, and appeared in dying for the faith, it was in their account madness; and at the same time they wisely thought it well deserved punishment. Celsus would not blame Christians for not forsaking or feigning to forsake an opinion that he thought a good one to shun any danger from men. But he finds great fault with them for being deceived, by not following reason and a rational guide, in receiving their opinion. They were guilty of believing without reason, and of saying that the wisdom of this world is evil. Thus they despised philosophy; and their faith was deceit. And for this deceit, it was not disagreeable to Celsus that they were tortured and crucified. In this manner was the faith treated by philosophy when it was reigning. The same sort of men talk much now against persecution; but, though circumstances be altered, and they would not suffer for their own Atheistical opinions, yet, against the same old Christian faith, they appear still possessed with the same spite and spirit of persecution that possessed the throne of the empire, when their most highly respected and dearly beloved Marcus Aurelius sat there, and murdered the Christians, and among the rest Justin Martyr, and Polycarp, and the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons.

NOTE II.

They seem to have power with the names of some demons, and with soothing incantations, (p. 195.) And (p. 197.) he says also of the Jews, they give themselves to enchantment, of which Moses was to them the interpreter.

Every thing of this kind was expressly forbid to the Jews by the law of Moses: for that law said, "There shall not
" be

“ be found among you — an user of divination, an ob-
 “ server of times, or an inchanter, or a witch, or a charm-
 “ er, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or
 “ a necromancer : for all that do these things are an abo-
 “ mination unto the Lord : and because of these abomina-
 “ tions, the Lord thy God doth drive them (these nations)
 “ out from before thee,” Deut. xviii. 9.—13. And again,
 “ A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or
 “ that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death : they shall
 “ stone them with stones : their blood shall be upon them,”
 Lev. xx. 27.

And the effect of the gospel, on them that believed it, among the nations, who had been learned in that sort of arts, was to make them burn all their books that treated of such things.

Elymas the forcerer opposed the gospel ; but his attempts were baffled by the superior power that attended it, punishing him as a child of the devil.

Demons sometimes offered their testimony to Jesus Christ, and to his apostles, but it was rejected ; as was that of the Pythonic prophets, saying, “ These men are the
 “ servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the
 “ way of salvation.”

Simon the magician, beholding the power that attended the word of faith, far beyond all the power of his magic, professed to believe the gospel. But when he supposed it to be only much greater in the same kind, and so wanted to purchase of the apostles, with money, the power of conveying the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of his hands, he was rejected, as having neither part nor lot in that word, or in the matter of the Holy Ghost ; because, by this, he shewed himself heartily wicked. The fathers testify that several heretics after him dealt in magic ; but in this they are testifying of their wickedness : for still they held it in the same abhorrence, as those did who burned their magical books, when they believed the gospel from the apostles. And therefore what Celsus says here of Christians having power with the names of certain demons, and what he says afterwards of such use of barbarous words, and names, and of books, they had concerning these, must be true only of those heretics with whose principles and practices he all alongst his book reproaches Christianity ; though they were rather philosophers, and had no part in Christianity but the name. For Celsus could not but know that

there were several philosophers learned in magic, though the Epicureans perhaps ridiculed it. But surely he would not, for this, lay the evil or the deceit of magic to the charge of philosophy.

It is very true that some Jews, in the time of Jesus Christ and his apostles, did cast out demons. And whatever name they used in doing this, we see they had no power with the name of Jesus, but were baffled by the demons, when they took upon them to use it against them. And it is also true, that the fathers testify, that Christians, in the time of Celsus, and afterward, expelled demons by the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. But they deny that they used any other name than his, or that they sought to make any gain by it, when they healed, or when they cast out demons by that name.

After the apostles had left the world, and left to the churches the New-testament revelation, perfected in their scriptures; it is hard to tell for what end miraculous powers should remain in the churches, and not be continued to the end of the world. The apostle Paul plainly signifies, that when New-testament revelation should be perfected, then *knowledge* by revelation, *tongues*, and *prophecy* would cease: and any reason that can be given for the continuance of miracles after that, must as well shew the continuance of them to the world's end. And therefore the signs and wonders after that, must be of that sort which the Lord and his apostles foretold, as accompanying the corruption of the Christian religion. Paul observed, that this corruption was beginning to take place even in his time, and foretold, that it would come at last to a great head in that Antichrist, whose "coming," he said, would be "after the working of Satan, with all power, "and signs, and wonders of a lie." And as the corruption of the Christian profession had gone some length against the end of the second century; it is agreeable to suppose, they might then have some signs and wonders to boast of; though, as the apostle also foretells, these, and all the other boasted miracles of Antichrist after these, no more came the length of the signs and wonders that attended the giving out of the New-testament revelation, than the signs of Jannes and Jambres in Egypt came the length of those wrought by Moses. And any one that has given due attention to the scripture-account of the miracles wrought by Jesus, or by the apostles in his name, must have a very
high

high notion of the deceits of jugglers, the mighty arts of magicians, and of the power of Satan in the signs and wonders of Antichrist, if he be able to compare all that ever was done in that way, or to equalize it in his own mind, with the signs and wonders of the gospel.

Irenæus speaks of the miracles that were in the apostolic churches, and boasts in them against the heretics; but, in doing this, he takes in all that were wrought by the apostles and others in the churches from the beginning; so that it is hard to tell from him what were those miracles wrought in his own time; or if they were any other, than some healings and castings out of demons, and some sort of prophesying: for, as to the raising of the dead, he speaks of that expressly, as a thing that had been long before his time, when he says, that they who had been so raised had lived several years with the churches after that resurrection. And this he seems to have taken from Quadratus, whom we have in Eusebius, hist. book 4. chap. 3.

But as to the expelling of demons and prophesying in the name of Christ, Jesus foretold, that there would be men, whom he would never acknowledge as his, being workers of iniquity, that would prophesy in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and in his name do many wonderful works. And when it is foretold, that the coming of Antichrist would be with signs and wonders countenancing the changing the truth of the gospel into a lie; we may suppose that what Jesus said of these men doing wonders in his name belongs to that. But it behoved all these wonders to be as far inferior to the miracles wrought by the apostles, as the casting out of devils by the Jewish exorcists was inferior to the casting them out by Jesus, as he said, "with the finger of God," alluding to what was said of the power that far outdid the magicians of Egypt.

NOTE III.

Opinions ought to be received following reason, and with a rational guide. — Some Christians, neither willing to give or receive a reason about the things they believe, use this, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith will save thee, p. 196.

The mind of man has other ways of knowing things besides that which is properly called reasoning. We must have principles to reason from; and whether these be

many or reducible to one, it must be first known before we can draw any inference from it: and surely then it is not received following reason, and with a rational guide. Thus the mind of man is possessed of several truths, and knows them previously to all reasoning, and with greater certainty than they can be known by any philosophical argument.

And such is that ancient word, about which so many different, ancient, wise nations, and wise men have been always conversant, which Celsus thinks Moses learned from them. Certainly this cannot be any of those opinions wherein he differed from Moses; but must be such as wherein he appeared to Celsus to agree with all these wise nations, and wise men: and that was always known by the whole human kind, the most foolish, as well as those accounted the most wise. The sum of the law given by Moses, as it is declared by Jesus Christ, to "love God with all the heart, "soul, and mind; and to love our neighbour as ourselves," must be assented to, upon the hearing of it, as right and good; and the opposite of it stand condemned, in the conscience of every man, as evil, and rendering us disagreeable to God.

What Moses taught of one Jehovah, the creator of the universe, and maker of this world in six days, resting the seventh; and of the character of this one God, as opposite to sin, as he is good; and yet shewing mercy to thousands of sinners, by means of that sovereign substitution, prefigured in the sacrifices, of a spotless sufferer in their stead, for the manifestation of the divine displeasure against sin, in the salvation of sinners, was not indeed known nor acknowledged by these wise nations, and wise men. But all nations of men, wise or unwise, having something of that dread of divine displeasure, which distinguishes men from brutes, and which was awakened in them, by their falling into grievous crimes, or great calamities, entertained an opinion, that the Deity was placable by sacrifice. And so all nations, in all parts of the globe, even those most lately found out, have worshipped by sacrifice almost in the same manner as Moses prescribed to the Jews. But surely this universal opinion and practice was not the effect of reasoning: for the mind of man is not naturally furnished with any principle from which this opinion about sacrifice could be inferred; and yet it has prevailed universally among the nations of mankind: so that no account
that

that is probable can be made of it, but that the first men had it from divine revelation, and that it came down from them by tradition.

Faith is a way we have of knowing things, different from the way of knowing the principles from which we reason, which is called intuitive knowledge by instinct or inward sense, different from the knowledge we come to by reasoning, which may be called *science*, and different from the knowledge we take in by our senses, which may be called *experience*. This knowledge of things by testimony, which, in distinction from the other ways of knowing, is called faith or belief, takes place only where other ways of knowing fail. Here testimony supplies the want of experience, fills up the empty place of a third idea to shew the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, as in science; and where that agreement or disagreement is clearly perceived without any medium, there is as little place for reasoning as for faith.

We may be deceived in believing; and so are we often in our reasoning, and in our experience: but we are as certain of some things known only by faith, as of any thing we know by reasoning and experience; and in our daily practice we proceed upon faith as confidently as upon any of the other two, and with as good success. It would therefore be most ridiculous to deny, that faith is a way of knowing competent to the mind of man. And it is no less absurd to demand reasoning in the place of faith; even as absurd as to require hearing from the eye, or sight from the ear. Such is the demand of the philosopher, to admit of no knowledge but what is properly called science, and his complaint of Christians as not willing to know the things of faith by reasoning; as if he had found fault with them because they would not hear with their eyes. The Christians then were perfectly in the right, not to give or take a reason for the things to be known by faith: and as to these things they said truly and most justly, Do not examine, but believe.

As faith is the credit we give to testimony, the knowledge we have of things by it, must be according to the testimony. We are used from our infancy to the knowledge of many things by the testimony of men; and we know some things this way with great certainty. But as the testimony of God must be greater than man's; so must our faith of his testimony, when we hear him, be greater than

than our belief of the testimony of men. And if men can testify to us, and make things known in the way of belief which otherwise we know not, it cannot be thought impossible for God, who made us capable of this way of knowing, to testify to us, and so make us know things by hearing his testimony, that could not be known otherwise; or, in the apostle's style, "to reveal things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." That man is capable of this sort of correspondence with God, is evident from the knowledge he has in his conscience, of the divine judgment against sin, by an instinct or inward sense proper to him, in distinction from the brutes. For if the moral sense in man go upon what is agreeable or disagreeable to society, and the remorse of conscience be only upon what is hurtful to society; it will be hard to distinguish him from other animals that live in society, as the ants and the bees. This verdict of his conscience is indeed the voice of God. And when he hears the judgment of God against him as a sinner testified in his conscience; it fills him with that sense of divine displeasure that is the true misery of man, whose proper happiness and life lies in the sense of the divine favour. From this misery God alone is able to relieve sinful men, who have no other way of knowing that the offended Deity is reconcileable to them, no other way of knowing how to be restored to his favour, and so relieved from the misery of the consciousness of being disagreeable to him; but, if God be pleased to shew them how to be reconciled, by testifying to the conscience wherein his displeasure was before notified. The prophets and apostles declared this testimony of God to the consciences of men. And it is set forth in their scriptures, in an agreeableness to the tradition that prevailed universally among mankind concerning God's being reconcileable to men by sacrifice. This testimony of God, declared by the prophets and apostles, is, that God is well pleased in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ his beloved Son, delivered to death for the offences of all sorts of sinners, and raised again for their justification. And every one that believes this, hears, in his conscience, the voice of the same God, whose wrath was known there, declaring himself well pleased; and so is saved from his misery, and becomes happy in peace with God. As this that is believed, was not knowable by any reasoning or argumentation from any principle of reason-
ing

ing that the mind of man was possessed of ; nor by any experience that sinful mortals could pretend to ; it was very proper for them, who found themselves saved in believing it, to say to reasoners against it, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith will save thee.

N O T E IV.

“ The Jews following Moses—esteemed God to be one.
 “ This one God they thought to be either the Most High,
 “ or Adonai, or the Heavenly, or Sabaoth, or howsoever
 “ they delight to name this very World, and nothing more
 “ knew they. It differs nothing to call the God over all,
 “ either by the name current among the Greeks, Jupiter,
 “ or this (say) among the Indians, or that among
 “ the Egyptians,” p. 196. 197. Connect with this what
 he says afterward, p. 218. and 219. “ If—the Jews would
 “ diligently observe their own law, this were not blame-
 “ able in them, but rather in those who leave their own
 “ things, and pretend to those of the Jews. But if, as
 “ knowing something more wise, they boast and turn a-
 “ way from the communion of others not equally pure;
 “ they have already heard, that they do not say a pecu-
 “ liar opinion concerning heaven ; but that I may pass
 “ all, what was held of old also by the Persians, as Hero-
 “ dotus likewise somewhere shews ; for he says, It is their
 “ custom, going up to the greatest height of mountains,
 “ to make sacrifices to Jupiter, calling all the circle of
 “ heaven Jupiter. I reckon then it differs nothing to call
 “ the Most High, Diespiter, or Jupiter, or Adonai, or Sa-
 “ baoth, or Ammon, as the Egyptians, or Pappai, as the
 “ Scythians.”

It is surprising how Celsus, who had read Moses, whom the Jews followed in their opinion of one God, came to say so confidently, that they knew no other for that one God, to whom they gave various names, but this very World ; when he could not but know, that they distinguished their one God from all other, as the Creator and maker of the world, and that they believed him to be the infinitely wise and powerful author and cause of nature, and the absolute commander of its whole course, even as he manifestly shewed himself, by reversing it at his pleasure, in all those miracles by which they became a nation, and with which their settlement in their country and their
 very

very constitution as a nation had a necessary connection.

He says afterward, p. 216. "The Jews may justly be
 " wondered at, if indeed they worship the heaven, and an-
 " gels that are there ; but the most venerable and power-
 " ful parts of it, the sun, and moon, and the other stars,
 " both fixed and planets, these they despise, as if it were
 " possible, that the whole indeed should be God, but the
 " parts of it not divine !"

Yet it is manifest, that the Jews, following Moses, could not worship heaven, nor any thing else but the Creator of heaven and earth, whom they believed to be omnipresent, filling heaven and earth ; but the place where he shewed himself especially present, or the residence of the glory of the divine Majesty, they believed to be, not the visible heavens, but the heaven of heavens, or third heaven, where is the throne of his glory, and where innumerable angels stand before him, and minister to him.

Nor did they worship angels, as Celsus says. They worshipped him that appeared to the fathers and to Moses in human likeness, who, because he was, in the fulness of time, to be sent forth from his Father, made of a woman, to redeem mankind, was called the Angel Redeemer, the angel God's face, and in whom is the name of God. But they looked on him as the most high God, and not another God than the same one God that created and made the heavens and the earth, and all things in them. And when they beheld his appearance, they called it the similitude of Jehovah, and the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. But there is no other foundation in the Jewish scriptures for saying, that the Jews worshipped the heavenly angels, or, as he says elsewhere, that they thought of God as a man : for, according to their law, they worshipped neither heaven, the dwelling place of the divine Majesty, nor the angels that worship God there, nor indeed any thing in heaven or earth, beside the one God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, who shewed himself to be so when he condescended to appear to them, and shew himself present in human likeness.

But while Celsus imputes this opinion to the Jews, that there is no other God but the world, it may be considered what he himself and some other philosophers thought of God ; for it is possible, that, saying this, he may mean, that neither Jews nor Persians, nor any other men could know any God above this very world ; because something
 like

like this may be inferred from his own words before noted. But let us hear him further.

He says, (*p.* 213.) "The world is unbegotten and incorruptible." The Jews had no such thought of the world. And, speaking against the resurrection of the dead as possible to God, he says, (*p.* 216. 217.), "God wills not things contrary to nature. — God is — the patron — of right and just nature. — Surely God neither would nor could unreasonably exhibit the flesh eternal; — for he is the reason of all beings; he can therefore work nothing unreasonable nor against himself." Surely this is not the miracle-working God of the Jews. And it might with better reason be said upon this, that Celsus knew nothing else for God but nature, or this same unbegotten and incorruptible world. Is it then his own opinion that he imputes to the Jews*?

But let us take together in one view all the instruction he has to give us from philosophy about God; that we may behold the contrast between the God of the philosophers, and the God of the Jews and Christians; even as we have before seen the contrast betwixt philosophy and the faith in the affair of death.

He says, (*p.* 209.) "If God himself shall descend to men, this will be the consequence, that he must desert his own throne: for if you should change any one thing, even the least here, all things overturned would go upon you to ruin?" And (*p.* 210.) "Now I say nothing but things established of old. God is good, and beautiful, and happy, and in the most comely and the best. If indeed he descend to men, there must be a change upon him, even a change from good to bad, and from comely to vile, and from happiness to misery, and from the best to the worst. Who then would chuse such a change? And certainly it is natural indeed to that which is mortal to be altered and transformed; but to the immortal, to be still the same thing, and in the same manner. By no means therefore would God admit of this change. Either God is truly changed, as they say, into a mortal body, and that is before said to be impossible; or he is not indeed changed, but makes the beholders

* All who hold miracles utterly impossible, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God, may be justly suspected of owning no God above nature, or of being Atheists.

“ think so, and deceives and lies. But deceit and a lie
 “ are otherwise indeed evil, but only if, as in the part of
 “ poison, one should use them, either to sick and distract-
 “ ed friends, curing them, or to enemies, taking care to
 “ escape danger. But neither is any sick or mad a friend
 “ to God, nor is God afraid of any, that deceiving he
 “ should escape danger.”

P. 213. “ But I would rather teach this, according to
 “ nature, that God made nothing mortal; but whatsoever
 “ things are immortal, these indeed are the works of God,
 “ but the mortal, of others. And the soul truly is the
 “ work of God; but the nature of the body is different.
 “ And in this respect the body of a bat, or worm, or
 “ frog, or man, differs nothing: for the matter is the
 “ same, and the corruptible of them alike. The nature
 “ of all the foresaid bodies is common, and, being one,
 “ goes and returns into reiterating change. And nothing
 “ begotten of matter is immortal. — Evils in beings, nei-
 “ ther before, nor now, nor afterward, are less and more:
 “ for the nature of all things is one and the same; and
 “ the generation of evils still the same. The world is
 “ unbegotten and incorruptible; and only the things on
 “ earth suffer deluges and conflagrations. — What should be
 “ the nature of evils, is not indeed easy to be known to
 “ one that does not philosophize. But it is enough to be
 “ said to the multitude, that evils are not indeed from
 “ God, but cleave to matter, and govern them that are
 “ evil. Now, the circuit of mortal things is alike from
 “ beginning to end; and, according to the established re-
 “ volutions, there is a necessity, that the same things al-
 “ ways both have been, and are, and shall be. Nor are
 “ these things given to man; but each of them comes
 “ into being, and perishes for the sake of the safety of the
 “ whole, according to the foresaid change from others to
 “ others. If any thing seem evil to thee, it is not yet mani-
 “ fest, if it be evil: for thou knowest not, that it is useful,
 “ either to thee, or to another, or to the whole. — (*P. 214.*)
 “ They say, that God made all things for man. Thun-
 “ ders, and lightnings, and rains, are not the works of
 “ God *. And if one should grant these to be the works
 “ of God.” — (*p. 215.*) “ These things therefore are not

* He says elsewhere, (*p. 216.*) “ These are brought forth by the
 “ sun, and moon, and the other stars.”

“ made to man, as neither to the lion, nor the eagle, nor
 “ the dolphin; but that this world, as the work of God,
 “ might be entire, and perfect out of all things. For the
 “ sake of this, all things have been measured, not of one
 “ another, but, if not every work, yet of the whole.
 “ And the whole is God’s care; and Providence at no
 “ time forsakes this; nor does it become worse; nor does
 “ God, through time, turn to it; nor is he angry because
 “ of men, as neither of apes, nor mice, each of whom
 “ in part has received a portion of it.”

Then he instructs us from Plato. (*p.* 221. and 222.)
 “ Plato says in some of his epistles, The first good is al-
 “ together inexpressible; but, by having much familiarity
 “ about that matter, and by living with it, suddenly, as
 “ from flaming fire, light being kindled in the soul, it
 “ now nourishes itself. And in the same epistle, If
 “ it appeared to me, that these things, both written suf-
 “ ficiently, and spoken, are for the multitude; how could
 “ we be better employed in life, than to write what is of
 “ great benefit to men, and bring forth * nature to light
 “ unto all. — Plato’s writings declare, that the good is
 “ known to few. — Plato — says somewhere in the laws,
 “ truly God, according to ancient word, holding the begin-
 “ ning, and the end, and the middle of all beings, perfects
 “ rectitude according to nature, pervading all round. But
 “ he is always followed by justice, the punisher of them
 “ that forsake the divine law. He truly that will be hap-
 “ py, cleaving to her, follows humble and modest †. — Pla-
 “ to says, All things are about the king of all, and all
 “ things are for his sake; and this is the cause of all good
 “ things; but the second about second things, and the
 “ third about the third things ‡. The human soul
 “ therefore

* This is that inexpressible first good which the light kindled in Plato’s soul discovered to him. And this same is his God whom he durst not declare to the multitude.

† His way to happiness is humbly to follow nature, and he that forsakes it must suffer for it.

‡ Plato, it seems, imagined a sort of trinity of nature in the whole of things distributed into first, second, and third things. And some Christian philosophers have imagined that he knew and taught their trinity. Yea Origen finds fault with Celsus for shunning to mention what Plato said of the Son of God in the epistle to Hiermias and Coriscus, and gives his saying thus, “ obtesting the God of all, the

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“ therefore desires to learn about these things, of what
 “ sort they are, looking to the things that are akin to
 “ her, of which she comprehends nothing fully. Surely
 “ there is nothing such concerning the king, and those
 “ things I said. Some Christians, misunderstanding the
 “ sayings of Plato, boast of a supercelestial God, transcending
 “ the heaven of the Jews.”

Celsus proceeds, and ridiculing the style of Moses writing of the making of the world, says (*p.* 228.) “ It is neither just, that the first God should be weary, nor work with his hands, nor give orders, nor has he a mouth, nor a voice, nor has he any other of these things which they know; nor did he make man his image: for God is not such, nor is he like to any other similitude. What sort of thing is it to think, that what is according to the image of God, is in that part of compounded man which is worse, *i. e.* the body! God partakes not of figure or colour: but neither partakes he of motion, nor does God partake of substance. All things are of him. Neither is God comprehensible by reason; nor is he nameable: for he suffers nothing that can be apprehended by a name. How then, may some say, shall I know God? And how shall I learn the way to him? And how do you shew him to me, As now you cast darkness before my eyes, and I see nothing clearly? Those whom one should bring forth of darkness into splendour, did light, not being able to bear the bright rays, would be punished in the sight, and hurt, and think to be blind. But Christians would give these questions, How shall we think to know God? and, How shall we be saved with him? this answer, Because God is great and hard to be beheld, he, throwing his own spirit into a body like us, hath sent him hither, that so we might be able to hear from him and learn. When they say, that God is spirit, they differ nothing in that from the Stoics among the Greeks, saying, that God is the spirit pervading all things, and comprehending all things in himself. Seeing

“ commander both of the things that are and shall be, and the father
 “ and lord of that commander and cause, whom, if we truly philosophize, we shall all know clearly to the power of happy men.”

Origen. con. Cels. lib. 6. p. 280. It may be true that Celsus says of some Christians, misunderstanding these sayings of Plato, applying them to their God. Justin Martyr had then wrote.

“ the

“ the Son is spirit from God, born in a human body,
 “ the Son of God himself would not be immortal: for
 “ there is no such nature of spirit, as to endure always;
 “ as it is not the nature of fire to continue for ever.”

P. 232. 233. He says further, “ But they will also say
 “ again, How shall they know God, not apprehending
 “ him by sense? What can possibly be learned without
 “ sense? The voice indeed, not of man, nor of the soul,
 “ but of the flesh! But yet let them hear, if they can even
 “ hear any thing, as a fearful and body-loving genera-
 “ tion; if, winking with sense, you would look up with
 “ the mind, and turning away the eye of the flesh, you
 “ would raise up that of the soul; only thus shall ye
 “ see God. And if ye seek a leader in this way, you
 “ must fly from impostors and jugglers. — But follow
 “ divinely-inspired poets, and the wise, and philosophers,
 “ and they will lead you. Follow Plato, who is a more
 “ effectual teacher of the matters of theology. He says, *It*
 “ *is indeed then a labour to find, and impossible for one that*
 “ *finds to declare unto all the Maker and Father of this*
 “ *universe.* You see how the way of truth is sought by
 “ prophets, and how Plato knew that it is impossible for
 “ every one to go in it. But since, for the sake of this, it is
 “ found out by wise men, that so we might get some per-
 “ ception of the unnameable, and first, manifesting him,
 “ either by the composition which is into other things, or
 “ by resolution from these, or willing to teach, by pro-
 “ portion, what is otherwise inexpressible; I would won-
 “ der if ye could follow, altogether bound up by flesh, and
 “ seeing nothing pure. *Substance and generation; intelli-*
 “ *gible, visible: with substance, truth; but with generation,*
 “ *error.* About *truth* then *science*; but about either, *opi-*
 “ *nion.* And *understanding* is of the *intelligible*, but *sight*
 “ of the *visible*. For the *mind* knows the *intelligible*, but
 “ the *eye* the *visible*. What therefore, in the visibles, is
 “ the sun, being neither eye nor sight; but to the eye the
 “ cause of seeing; to the sight, of consisting by him; and
 “ to visibles, of being seen; to all sensibles, of being; and
 “ not he, to himself, of being seen; that in the intelli-
 “ gibles is he, who is neither mind, nor understanding,
 “ nor science; but to the mind the cause of understand-
 “ ing; and to the understanding, of being by him; and
 “ to science, of knowing by him, and to all intelligibles,
 “ and to the truth itself, and to substance itself, of being
 “ beyond

“ beyond all things ; he being intelligible by a certain
 “ ineffable power. These things are said by men having
 “ understanding. But if ye also understand any thing of
 “ these, it holds in us. And if ye think of any spirit de-
 “ scending from God to tell forth divine things, this would
 “ be the spirit that preaches these things ; of whom an-
 “ cient men being indeed filled, have told many and good
 “ things, which if you cannot hear, hold your peace, and
 “ hide your own ignorance, and do not say, that those are
 “ blind who see, and that those are lame who run ; being
 “ yourselves wholly lamed in your souls and mutilated,
 “ and living to body, that is, to a dead one.”

Now, this is all the God that Celsus has to oppose to the
 God of the Jews and Christians. And after all he has said
 for their instruction, from men of understanding, filled
 with the divine spirit, concerning this unnameable and
 first, which is neither spirit, nor substance, nor mind, nor
 understanding, and surely not body ; may it not be, after
 all, inquired, What is it that he and these men saw for
 God, winking with sense, and looking up with the mind,
 and turning away the eye of the flesh, and lifting up that
 of the soul ? Did they behold the cause of knowledge, not
 knowing, and the cause of understanding, not understand-
 ing, and the cause of all things, nothing different from
 them, that can be named ? Yet who can call them blind ?
 For they see what neither Jew nor Christian can see !

We may here also observe what is said by Marcus
 Antoninus on this subject, because he does not seem to
 differ at bottom from Celsus and his ancient wise men.
 He says, (book 9.), “ He that acts unjustly, acts impiously :
 “ for the nature of the whole having framed rational ani-
 “ mals, for the sake of one another, so as to help indeed
 “ one another according to fitness, but in no wise to hurt ;
 “ it is manifest, that the transgressor of her decree acts
 “ impiously against the eldest of the gods : for the nature of
 “ the whole is the nature of beings. But beings all hold
 “ fastly together. But yet the same is also named the truth,
 “ and is the first cause of all true things. He indeed,
 “ therefore, that lies wittingly, does impiously, in as much as,
 “ deceiving, he acts unjustly ; but he that lies unwittingly,
 “ in as much as he acts discordant to the nature of the
 “ whole, and in as much as he acts disorderly, fighting a-
 “ gainst the nature of the world.” Sometimes this philo-
 sopher hesitates betwixt this nature of the whole, before
 which

which he knew no God, and the atoms of Epicurus; as when he says, (book 10. 6.), "Whether atoms or nature, let this be first laid down, that I am a part of the whole administrated by nature." But whether they spake of no first cause beside atoms, or spake high swelling words that had no meaning beyond this nature of the whole, they were all Atheists; and they were conscious of this, dissembling it, and fearing to be discovered by the multitude.

N O T E V.

The leader of this generation;—he before a very few years led the way of this doctrine, being esteemed by Christians to be the Son of God. P. 197.

We may here take together in one view all that Celsus says on this subject, if thereby we may understand what was known to be the faith of Christians in his time concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

P. 197. "Jesus—returned (from Egypt) highly conceited of these powers, and for them proclaimed himself God."

P. 198. "The Chaldeans were said by Jesus to have been moved to come to his birth, worshipping him, yet a babe, as God.—But what need was there to transport thee, yet an infant, into Egypt, lest thou shouldst be killed? for it was not like God to be fearful about death."

P. 199. "The body of God would not be such an one as thine."

P. 199. 200. "But how were we to esteem him God who—shewed the performance of nothing that he promised.—And truly, it neither suits with him that is God, to fly, nor to be led away bound; and yet less to be deserted and betrayed by his familiars, and them that partook with him in all things, and that used him as their teacher, and accounted him the Saviour, and the child and messenger of the greatest God."

P. 200. "How, if he foretold both him that betrayed him, and him that denied him, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not yet betray, nor the other deny?—Being God he foretold these things; and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass. God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that
" they

“ they should be ungodly and impious. — But he that
 “ eat with God became a conspirator! And which is yet
 “ more absurd, God himself conspired against his table-
 “ companions, making them betrayers and impious! —
 “ If these things seemed good to him, and he was punish-
 “ ed obeying his Father, it is manifest, that to him, being
 “ God, and also willing, these usages, according to his
 “ mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why
 “ then does he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the
 “ fear of destruction may pass away? — None would com-
 “ mend God and the Son of God from such signs. —
 “ For as the sun, enlightening all other things, first shews
 “ himself; so it behoved the Son of God to do.”

P. 201. 202. Ye are sophistical, in saying, that the Son is
 “ the very Logos, (*αυταλογος*). — But after promising the
 “ Word to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and
 “ holy Word, but a most ignominious man, scourged and
 “ crucified. — And what noble thing did Jesus as God,
 “ despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel
 “ him? — Why did he not, if not before, yet now at
 “ least, manifest something divine, and deliver himself
 “ from that shame, and treat them that reproached both
 “ him and his Father, as they deserved. — Do ye thus
 “ accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account
 “ him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these
 “ things for the help of men, and that we might despise
 “ punishments?”

P. 202. 203. 204. “ By what reasoning were ye induced
 “ to esteem him the Son of God? We were induced by
 “ this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of
 “ the father of wickedness. — We esteem him to be the
 “ Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind,
 “ and (as ye say) raised the dead. — How is it not then
 “ miserable, from the same works, to reckon one God,
 “ and others impostors? — By what then were ye indu-
 “ ced? Was it because he foretold, how, being dead, he
 “ would rise again? — But how many others have dealt
 “ in such wonders? — Or do ye think that those of o-
 “ thers are and appear to be fables? But to you, his voice
 “ when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and
 “ the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe
 “ of the drama? Yea, that living indeed, he could not
 “ help himself; but being dead, he arose and shewed the
 “ marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been
 “ pierced.

“ pierced. — If Jesus would really declare his divine
 “ power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him
 “ ill, and to him that condemned him, and indeed to all.
 “ For surely he no more feared any man, being dead,
 “ and, as ye say, being God. — He ought, for the ma-
 “ nifestation of his Godhead, to have, at least, disappeared
 “ directly from the cross. — If he wanted to be hid,
 “ why was the voice heard from heaven, proclaiming him
 “ the Son of God? But if he would not be hid, why was
 “ he crucified, or why did he die? — O most high and
 “ heavenly! what God coming to men was disbelieved,
 “ and appeared to them that hoped for these things?
 “ — For in these he openly confesses, that he cannot
 “ persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet
 “ with a prudent man.”

P. 206. 207. “ They who worship him that was taken
 “ and put to death, do much the same with the Getæ,
 “ worshipping Zamolxis. — If you would compare Apol-
 “ lo or Jupiter to him, they would not bear it. Faith, pre-
 “ possessing their soul, makes this sort of an assent concern-
 “ ing Jesus. Him, being of a mortal body, they esteem
 “ God; and in this they think they do piety. But putting
 “ off the impure infirmities of the flesh, he will then be
 “ God. Why then not rather Æsculapius, and Bacchus,
 “ and Hercules? They laugh at the worshippers of Ju-
 “ piter, seeing his sepulchre is shown in Crete; and never-
 “ theless worship him who is of the sepulchre.”

P. 208. “ They say that God is sent to sinners.”

P. 209. 210. “ What did God mean by such a descent?
 “ Was it that he might learn the affairs of men? for did
 “ he not know all? he knew then indeed; but he did not
 “ rectify, nor was it possible for him by divine power to rec-
 “ tify, if some one were not sent that should be born to
 “ this purpose! If God himself shall descend to men, this
 “ will be the consequence, that he must desert his own
 “ throne. For if you should change any one thing, even
 “ the least here; all things overturned would go up-
 “ on you to ruin. — Not needing to be known for him-
 “ self, but for our salvation. — If indeed he descend
 “ to men, there must be a change upon him. — And cer-
 “ tainly it is natural to that which is mortal, to be altered
 “ and transformed; but to the immortal, to be still the
 “ same, and in the same manner. By no means, therefore,
 “ would God admit of this change. Either God is truly

“ changed (as they say) into a mortal body ; or he is not
 “ indeed changed, but makes beholders think so. — The
 “ Jews on their part say, that life being filled with all wick-
 “ edness, one should be sent from God, that the unright-
 “ teous may be punished, and all things purged. — And the
 “ Christians again, adding some words to those said by the
 “ Jews, say that the Son of God is already sent for the
 “ sins of the Jews ; and that the Jews, punishing Jesus,
 “ and giving him gall to drink, drew gall from God upon
 “ themselves.”

P. 216. “ God indeed, O Jews and Christians, and no
 “ child of God, neither descended, nor would descend.
 “ But if ye speak of certain angels, say who these are,
 “ gods ? or some other kind ? Some other, as it seems,
 “ demons. — (*P. 219.*) And that indeed there came also
 “ to his own sepulchre an angel, some say one, and others
 “ two, answering the women, that he was risen : for the
 “ child of God, it seems, was not able to open the sepul-
 “ chre, but needed another to remove the stone.”

P. 225. “ Not holy to say, That the great God truly,
 “ being willing to do any good to men, hath one work-
 “ ing against him, and is not able. The child of God
 “ then is put to the worse by the devil, and, being pu-
 “ nished by him, teaches us all to despise punishments !
 “ foretelling, that Satan himself also, in like manner ap-
 “ pearing, shall shew great works and wonders, usurping
 “ to himself the glory of God, to which they must not
 “ give heed who would avoid him, but believe himself
 “ alone. — (*P. 226.*) But they say that the Son of God
 “ is punished by the devil, and he punishes them.”

P. 227. “ But I signify whence this came to them, to
 “ call the Son of God. Ancient men called the very
 “ world, as made of God, both his child and God. Al-
 “ together like, certainly, is this and that child of
 “ God !”

P. 229. “ Whence should he be demonstrated the
 “ child of God who suffered such punishments, if it had
 “ not been foretold concerning him ! — Seeing the divine
 “ spirit was in a body ; it altogether behoved it somewhat
 “ to excel the rest, in greatness, or beauty, or strength,
 “ or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence : for it is unac-
 “ countable, that what had something divine more than
 “ others, should differ nothing from another ; but (as ye
 “ say) was little, and hard favoured, and ignoble.”

P. 231.

P. 231. " If the prophets should have foretold, that
 " the great God — would serve, or be sick, or die; it
 " behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick; seeing it was
 " foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is
 " God. But prophets would never have foretold this;
 " for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be
 " considered, whether it be foretold or not foretold, but
 " if it be a work worthy of God and good? But for the
 " shameful and evil, though all madmen should appear to
 " foretell it, it is incredible. How then are the things
 " holy that were done about him, as about God! If these
 " things were prophesied of the God over all, must then
 " such things be believed of God, seeing they are foretold?"

P. 231. 232. " Blaspheming others demonstrated to
 " be gods, as idols; but worshipping him who is truly
 " more miserable than even idols themselves, and not
 " yet an idol, but verily dead, and seeking a father
 " like unto him. Truly for such deceit — wretched
 " ye are tortured, and crucified. (P. 236. 237.) — Truly
 " they are manifestly convicted, that they worship not
 " God, but neither demons, but one that is dead. — If tru-
 " ly these served no other but one God, they would per-
 " haps have some strong reason against others; but now
 " they worship excessively him that lately appeared, and
 " withal think that nothing is done wickedly about God,
 " if also his servant be served. If you should teach them,
 " that this is not his child; but that he is indeed the Fa-
 " ther of all, who alone truly ought to be worshipped;
 " they yet would not, without him also, who is their lead-
 " er of sedition. And truly they have called him the Son
 " of God; not because they worship God exceedingly, but
 " because they magnify him exceedingly. — They substi-
 " tute another supercelestial God his Father, concerning
 " whom they have consented to worship; that, under pre-
 " tence of the great God, they may worship him alone,
 " whom they set up the Son of man, whom they declare
 " stronger and lord of the ruling God: hence they have
 " this commandment, Not to serve two lords."

From all this that Celsus says of the belief of Christians concerning Jesus, and of the worship they paid to him, as the Son of God, and from all his reasonings against it, we may easily see what was the faith of Christians in his time concerning the person of Jesus Christ. It is manifest they distinguished him from all other men, calling him the

Son of God: for Celsus makes his Jew address him thus, (p. 198.) "If thou sayest this, that every man, according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God; wherein, then, art thou different from another?" They distinguished him personally from all other men by this name; esteeming him the Son of God, or child of God, in this way peculiar and proper to himself, that though he is really man, yet he is not a human, but a divine person descending from the Father, and sent by him, taking that flesh and blood, or that human soul and body, born of Mary, to be his own soul, and his own body; so that this holy thing born of her, is no other person but the Son of God; and therefore is called the Son of God. On account of his being sent forth in this manner from the Father, and being thus made of a woman, he was called the Angel, when he appeared of old to the fathers in human likeness, and was worshipped by them; and was said by Christians, according to their scriptures, to have descended, and to have been sent. When Celsus thinks he has demonstrated, that neither God nor child of God could descend, he supposes his adversaries in this question, being thus confuted, as to the descent of God, or the Son of God into man, might talk of the descent of some angels, whom he considers as demons, as that which they meant by the descent of the Son of God; and he guards against this supposed evasion, by putting them in mind of manifold descents of such angels mentioned in their scriptures, and of their being sent, severals of them, about Jesus: so that, if this was their meaning, they could not speak consistently with themselves, of any sending or descent peculiar and proper to him.

His reasoning against Christians calling Jesus the Son of God, represents them to us as making him as much, and as truly God, as the Son of man is man; even the great God, the God over all, and so worshipping him, as they would not do any thing but God! for he reasons against his descent into man, as inconsistent with the immutability of God, and against the appearance of the man Jesus, especially as crucified, as utterly incompatible with the greatness and majesty of the God over all. And thus Celsus plainly makes the same very account of the Christians, calling Jesus the Son of God, that the Jews made of Jesus, calling himself so, when they said unto him, "Thou being a man makest thyself God." But neither he,
 nor

nor the Jews charged this with the making of more gods than one. Celsus speaks also of the spirit of God sent into that human body; perhaps taking occasion from what used to be said by Christians, of the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost being united with the man who is the Son of God, and dwelling eminently in him. Yet he does not attempt, upon this, to represent them as holding three gods. Their known doctrine about the time when Celsus wrote, is plainly set forth by another adversary cotemporary with Celsus. Lucian, in his * Philopatris, says, "The God reigning on high, great, eternal, heavenly; the Son of the Father; the Spirit proceeding from the Father; one of three, and three of one; esteem thou these to be Jove! think this to be God!"

If Celsus had not this view that Christians had from the gospel, that the Son of God took that holy thing conceived by the virgin to be his own soul and his own body, so that the man Jesus was no human person, nor any other divine person but the Son of God; we need not be surpris'd at his ignorance of that personal union, when we see what view Origen, the Christian philosopher, would give us of it, when he explains it in answer to Celsus. He says, (*book 2. p. 62. 63. 64.*) "Neither do we conceive the body of Jesus, then seen and felt, to be God; and what say I the body! but neither the soul of which this is said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.* But likeas, according to the word of the Jews, he that says, *I am the Lord, the God of all flesh*; and this, *Before me there was no other God, and there shall not be after me*, is believed to be God, using as an organ the soul and the body of the prophet: yea, according to the Greeks, he that says, *I know the number of the sand, and the measure of the sea, I understand the dumb, and hear him that speaks not*, is esteemed God, speaking and being heard through Pythia! In like manner, according to us, God the Word, and Son of the God of all things, said in Jesus this, *I am the way, the truth, and the life*; and this, *I am the door*; and this, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven*; and if there be any other thing like these."

* If Lucian be not the author of the PHILOPATRIS, it must be more ancient. For it seems to have been written in the time of Trajan's wars; if it was not writ by Lucian in the time of Marcus Antoninus, when Cassius overthrew the Parthians.

According

According to this account he gives of the thing, Jesus is no otherwise the Word or Son of God, than as any of the inspired prophets was God, or than as the Pythia was he that spake through her, whom the Greeks esteemed God. But surely Celsus could not perceive this to be the sense that Christians in his time had of the matter; else he would not have charged them as he does, with esteeming Jesus himself to be the Son of God, and to be God, and with worshipping him as God, while they confessed him a crucified man.

Origen proceeds thus: " But that the gospels know not him that says this in Jesus, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life*, to be any thing circumscribed, as to be no way without the soul and body of Jesus, is manifest, both from many, and from the few that we subjoin, which are thus." Then, after quoting to this purpose, John i. 20. and Matth. xviii. 20. and Matth. xxviii. 20. he says, — " But we say these things not separating the Son of God from Jesus: for the soul and the body of Jesus is one with the Word of God, especially after the œconomy: for if according to the doctrine of Paul, saying, *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*; whoever understands what it is to be joined to the Lord, and he that is joined to him is one spirit with the Lord; how is not that, when united, much more divinely and grandly one with the Word of God?"

It seems Origen did not mind this, that, beside the oneness of the Son of God with the Father, as one and the same God with him, and beside the personal union of that soul and body with the Son of God, by virtue of which it is called the Son of God; the gospel also teaches us, that the Son of God is united likewise with the Father in his human soul and body, by the Holy Ghost inhabiting that soul and body in the most eminent manner. And like unto this union of the man Christ Jesus with the Father, is the union of his church with him; even as he, by the Spirit of the Father, eminently inhabiting, and as possessing his soul and body, is one with the Father. But for this union with the Father, Jesus cannot be called the Father, as he is called the Son of God, nor can he for this be called the Holy Ghost, as he is, and must, according to the gospel, be called the Son of God, and the Word of God. Even as he that is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit with him, is not, for this, the Lord, and cannot, on this account, be called

called the Lord; yea, nor the Spirit of the Lord, as the gospel taught Christians to call, and as Celsus found them calling Jesus the Son of God, and the Word of God, whom they accounted a divine person, and therefore called him God. If, therefore, the union of that soul and body with the Word of God be of the same kind with the union of him with the Lord, who is joined to him, and is one spirit with him, (though much more grand in the same kind); this will never justify calling it the Word of God, or the Son of God, and so God. For a Christian, according to this, had only such like reason for calling Jesus the Lord, as he had for calling himself the Lord.

And this brings to mind the answer that Origen gives to what Celsus made his Jew say to Jesus, (*book 1. p. 44.*)
 "If thou sayest this, that every man according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God, what then dost thou differ from another?" His answer to this is, "That every one indeed, who, as Paul names it, is no more tutored by fear, but who chuses honesty for itself, is the Son of God; but he differs much and far from every one that is called the Son of God for virtue, who is as some fountain and beginning of them that are such. This is what Paul says, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, in which we cry Abba, Father.*"

Though Origen was a great student of the scriptures, yet it seems his philosophy could not let him understand the New Testament, plainly shewing, that we become the sons of God through the relation the Son of God condescended to with us, in becoming partaker with us in flesh and blood, so that he is not ashamed to call us brethren; and being restored to the favour of God by the righteousness his Son wrought for us, we are reconciled to him as our Father; and the confidence his Spirit gives us of our acceptance with him through his Son's righteousness, sets us above that bondage and fear they were in, who lived under the law not yet fulfilled by the Son of God. How much and far does this differ from what the philosopher says of Jesus being the spring and beginning of such as chuse virtue, not from fear, but for itself, for which he and they are called sons of God, he differing from them as the original of this!

But neither does the Christian philosopher seem to understand what Christians, in the time of Celsus, believed of the oneness

oneness of the Son with the Father as God, when they looked on him as sent forth from the Father, made of a woman, made under the law, and as serving him in his soul and body, and yet worshipped him as not another God, but as one and the same God with him: for they would not serve two gods. For he says, upon this oneness with the Father, (book 8. p. 385. 386.), “If Celsus had understood this, *I and the Father are one*; and that said in prayer by the Son of God, in this, *As I and thou are one*, he would not have thought that we serve also another besides the God over all; for he says, *The Father is in me, and I in the Father*. But if any should be disturbed by these things, lest perhaps we go over to them who deny the Father and the Son to be two persons*, let him know this, *There was one heart and soul of all them that believed*, that he may behold this, *I and the Father are one*. We therefore serve one God, as we have interpreted, the Father and the Son; and the word that is against others, abides firm to us: and we do not excessively worship him that lately appeared as not being before; for we believe him saying, *Before Abraham was I am*, and saying, *I am the truth*. And none of us is so stupid as to think, that the substance of the truth was not before the times of the appearance of Christ. Therefore we worship the Father of the truth, and the Son the truth; being two things in subsistence, but one in sameness of mind, and in symphony, and in identity of will, so that he who hath seen the Son, (*being the brightness of the glory and express image of the person of God*), hath seen God in him, being the *image of God*.

Thus he makes the oneness of the Father and the Son, as the object of worship, to be of the same kind with the oneness among them that believe, being of one heart and of one soul; which, though it be in the highest degree, can never make them one God, can never make them the object of their worship who worship none but one God. And so he makes void the true oneness of the Son with the Father, as well as the oneness of Jesus with the Son, studying to illustrate, by other things, those to which there is nothing that can be compared or be any way equal.

Nor is his account of the worship paid to the Son of

* *Υποστάσις*. — It is hard to tell whether Origen, in this passage, means by this word persons or substances.

God disagreeable to this explication of his oneness with the Father: for he goes on, in the same passage, to answer Celsus in this manner, "Then he thinks it follows to us, from
 " our serving with God his Son, that, according to us also,
 " not God only, but also his servants should be served. If
 " indeed then he understands them that are truly servants
 " of God, after the only begotten of God, Gabriel and
 " Michael, and the rest of the angels, archangels, and had
 " said that these should be served; perhaps purging what
 " he signifies concerning serving and the actions of the
 " server, we would say on the head, as discoursing of
 " such, what things we have attained to understand of
 " them. But now esteeming the demons worshipped by
 " the nations, servants; he draws not us by the consequence which is concerning the serving of such whom
 " the word manifests the servants of the wicked, and the
 " prince of this world, drawing away from God whom he
 " can. So then we decline not to worship and serve all
 " servants whom other men worship; for if we had learned
 " ed them to be servants of the God over all, we would
 " not say they are demons. But we worship one God and
 " his one Son, and Word, and Image, with supplications
 " and praises, as we are able, offering prayers to the God
 " of all things, through his only begotten, to whom we
 " first offer them, counting him worthy, being the propitiation for our sins, to offer, as high priest, both our
 " prayers and sacrifices and intercessions to the God over
 " all. Our faith therefore is concerning God, by his Son
 " confirming it in us; and Celsus has not any sedition
 " of ours to shew concerning the Son of God. And
 " indeed we worship the Father, admiring his Son, the
 " *Word*, and *Wisdom*, and *Truth*, and *Righteousness*, and
 " all things which we have learned the Son of God to
 " be, even so, and the begotten of such a Father."

What sort of worship and service may this be that Origen would allow to archangels, the servants of God in order after the only begotten of God? Is it the same kind of service that he would do first to him, the chief servant, and to them next servants after him? The Son of God was made a little lower than the angels, in becoming the Son of man to serve. For he that was in the form of God took on him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the

cross. This is the service he did in his soul and body, wherein being gloriously rewarded for his service, he is demonstrated to be the Son of God, appearing no more in the weakness of the flesh, but in the power of an endless life; and so is worshipped as God by angels and men. But Origen makes him a servant as he was before the arch-angels, and so to be worshipped, as they perhaps may also be after him. And the worship he allows to him is the offering of our prayers to him first, as the high priest, that he may offer them to the God over all; which is his sense of our access to the Father through him. But as there is no instance in the New Testament of any such address to him, (though we have several instances of solemn prayer to him, as Acts vii. 59. 60. and 2 Cor. xii. 8. 9. and a representation of solemn worship and adoration paid to him, the propitiation for our sins, by angels and men, Rev. v. 8.—13.); so neither does Celsus take any notice of this way of addressing him in prayers among the Christians in his time, for he reasons against them, as honouring him even as they honoured the Father which sent him; for this they did, according to the scripture, when they asked the Father in his name.—Celsus, charging them with worshipping him even as the Father, tacitly acknowledges, that so they might, if he were the Son of God as they believed him to be, when he says, “If you
 “ would teach them, that this is not his child, but that he
 “ is indeed the Father of all, who alone truly ought to be
 “ worshipped; they yet would not without him also, who
 “ is their leader of sedition. And indeed they have na-
 “ med him God’s Son, not because they worship God ex-
 “ ceedingly, but because they magnify him exceeding-
 “ ly.”

To this Origen, applying to him the words of Heb. i. 3. and Wisd. vii. 26. gives this reply,—“We know, that he
 “ is Son from him, and he is his Father. And there is
 “ nothing improper in the word, nor incongruous to God,
 “ substituting such an only begotten son. And none could
 “ persuade us, that such an one is not the Son of the un-
 “ begotten God and Father.”

This is new style *. This distinction, of a begotten and an unbegotten God, is foreign to the scripture. And we cannot

* *New* with respect to the scripture; for Justin Martyr used it before, and perhaps Origen borrowed it from him.

learn, from what Celsus writes, that the Christians in his time knew any thing of it; for, according to him and Lucian, they believed the Father and the Son, though the one was not the other, yet to be one and the same most high God.

Origen proceeds: "And we say, that he is the Son of God; but of God whom (if the sayings of Celsus must be followed) we worship exceedingly, and we acknowledge his Son exceedingly magnified by the Father. But let it be, that some, as among the multitude of believers, and taking a different way of speaking for rashness, suppose that the Saviour is the God over all; but surely nothing such, we who believe him, saying, The Father, who sent me, is greater than I."

Following the sayings of Celsus, he changes them: for whereas Celsus had said, they magnified him exceedingly, Origen says, they acknowledged him exceedingly magnified by the Father. And differing from those, among the multitude of believers, whom he accuses of rashness (not heresy) for calling the Saviour God over all; he differs as much from Paul's way of speaking, as from theirs who believed him, saying, *Christ is God over all, blessed for ever*. They who followed Paul in this way of speaking, believed (as well as Origen) him who took the form of a servant, saying of himself, as in that form serving the Father, and receiving of him the reward of that service, *My Father is greater than I*; but this did not hinder them (as it did Origen) from believing his being in the form of God, and, in that form, his being no less than the Father, as having the same Godhead with him: for thus did they understand him saying, *My Father and I are one*; even as did the Jews, to whom he spake it, saying to him upon it, *Thou being a man makest thyself God*. And the great fault that Celsus finds with the Christians in his time, is their believing this. But Origen did not believe him, even as in the form of God, to be equal with the Father, or that *he called God his Father, making himself equal with God*: for in the highest respect he has to him, as one with the Father, he accounts him a lesser than the Father, and will not allow him to be called *God over all*. Arius, therefore, was not the first that broached this doctrine that now goes under his name. The school of Alexandria produced it; and it came of philosophy, pretending to explain the word of faith; not of the scriptures setting forth that word in the most simple man-

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ner. And such was the effect of philosophy and school-learning in the profession of Christianity, from the beginning of its connection with it. Yea, even they who sought to explain and defend the apostolic doctrine philosophically, lost the primitive simplicity and power of it, turning aside to vain jangling and strifes of words. The ancient faith of the Son of God and philosophy may be better viewed, in their proper native opposition, from the writings of Celsus, than from any theological disputes, where they are confounded and blended together.

NOTES on the true Discourse of Celsus, tom. 1.
sect. 1.

N O T E I.

P. 197. — Put away by her husband, by trade a carpenter, convicted of having committed adultery, being deflowered by some soldier whose name was Panthera.

Celsus makes his Jew tell this story. But the Jews had nothing like this to tell in the time of Jesus, when they said, *Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence hath this man all these things? and were offended in him; and when they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?* At that time they were firmly persuaded he was begotten by Joseph the carpenter, the husband of Mary; but, in express contradiction to that ground of offence at his high pretences, it seems they had framed this story, and published it about the time when Celsus wrote: for Justin Martyr, who wrote his dialogue with the Jews not long before, had heard nothing of it. Celsus gives no voucher for this story, but his Jew whom he personates, and makes say many things he did not believe, and some things not very consistently with himself. The story of the carpenter putting away the mother of Jesus, and of his serving and learning magic in Egypt, will not agree with "transporting him yet an infant into Egypt, "whither the angel bade him and those of his family flee." Nor will this story tell consistently with what is said by
this

this Jew in the conclusion of his discourse to the followers of Jesus: "From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witness: for ye fall in your own snare." Surely the story of Panthera came not from their own scriptures. But it appears to have been forged after the New Testament was written, and read by the Jews: for it proceeds upon what is written in the gospel, of Mary's espousal to the carpenter, and of his being minded to put her away privily, when she was found with child, before they came together; even as what is told of Jesus serving for hire in Egypt, and there learning magic, is built upon the gospel-history, of the flight into Egypt, cutting off his return from thence to Nazareth, yet a child. And such likewise is that Jewish fable, in their book called *The generation of Jesus*, where this story of Panthera is told, and the miracles of Jesus imputed to some mighty power in the name *Jehovah*, which he stole out of the temple. The name *Panthera*, in this Jewish fiction, is not a Hebrew or Syriac word, but the Greek *Panther*; and from it some Rabbi took occasion to compare Jesus to a leopard begot betwixt a panther and a lioness, as being begot by a Greek soldier on a Hebrew woman. In making this fiction, they might possibly have coined a name to this imaginary adulterer out of *Parthenos*, the Greek word for a virgin used in the gospels. It was easy to turn this word into *Panthera*; and so they could tell the name of their deflowerer of the virgin. But they also tell his occupation: He was a foldier; for what they make him do was not improper for one of that calling.

N O T E II.

P. 197. — *What witness worthy of credit saw this vision? or who heard the voice from heaven adopting thee the Son of God, but that thou sayest, and adducest some one of those punished with thee?*

When Celsus made his Jew talk thus of John Baptist, and his testimony to Jesus, he was not reflecting, that this same witness was one held in the greatest veneration by the Jews. Priests and Levites were sent to him from Jerusalem, to inquire at him if he was the Messiah, or that great prophet foretold by Moses. And the chief priests and elders durst not deny to Jesus, that his baptism was from heaven, for fear of being stoned by the people, who were all persuaded

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persuaded that he was a prophet indeed. Yea, the esteem that the Jews had of him, is attested by Josephus the Jewish historian, in this manner, (*Antiq. book 18. chap. 5.*): “ Now, “ many of the Jews were of opinion, that Herod had “ met with this defeat, as a just judgment of God for ha- “ ving slain John, surnamed *the Baptist*: for he had put “ this good man to death, who only excited the Jews to the “ practice of virtue, admonishing them to live just towards “ one another, pious towards God, and to be baptized; “ telling them, that baptism would be acceptable to God, “ not by abstaining from this or that particular sin, but “ by an habitual purity of mind, as well as of body. Great “ numbers flocked from every where to him, greatly de- “ lighted with his discourses; which made Herod afraid, “ lest the great authority of this man should draw his sub- “ jects to a revolt: for he saw, that they all implicitly “ did what he commanded them: therefore he thought it “ more safe to prevent a growing mischief, by putting “ him to death, than to allow him opportunity to raise “ any commotion of which he might afterwards repent. “ On this suspicion Herod sent him away bound to the “ castle of Macheron, whereof we have spoken hereto- “ fore, and there he was put to death. And the Jews re- “ mained persuaded, that Herod’s army received this de- “ feat, for the destruction of this just man.” If Celsus had considered this, he would never have made his Jew speak of John as a man worthy of no credit, and as one justly put to death; whose testimony therefore was not to be regarded.

But while Celsus makes so little of John’s testimony to Jesus, and turns off this evidence so very lightly; we may yet find something about this same John Baptist and his ministry worthy of our attention. The good news of the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah in Jesus, began to be told in the preaching of John, who said, the design of his coming baptizing with water, was *that he should be made manifest to Israel*. He testified of Jesus, saying, *I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* The ministry of John was foretold by the prophets; and the prophecies concerning him, as the messenger sent before the face of
the

the Messiah, and the preparer of his way, set forth the Messiah as the Lord God, even as John testified of him. And as the evidence of Jesus being the Christ, and the Son of God, began at the baptism of John, he prophesied that it should be completed by his baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And when Jesus fulfilled this prophecy on the day of Pentecost, pouring down the Holy Ghost with fire on his disciples, as he promised to them before his ascension, according to the prediction of John; he then finished the proof of his being the same that John testified of him according to the prophets; and this to the conviction of thousands of those same Jews that had thought him worthy of death for calling himself the Son of God.

When John Baptist testified of Jesus, as the Messiah foretold by the prophets, he set that Messiah in a view very opposite to the expectation of the Jews that had been raised by a false interpretation of the prophecies prevailing amongst them at that time.

For, 1st, Though Celsus supposes the Jews believing that their Messiah, yet to come, was to be the Son of God descending into man; yet it cannot appear that they looked on their Messiah as God. But John, pointing out Jesus as the Messiah, bare testimony that *this is the Son of God*, saying, he was not worthy to unloose his shoes latchet, who, coming after him, is preferred before him, because he was before him; and that he came from above, and was above all, &c.

2. The Jews, as Celsus observed, were looking for the Messiah foretold by the prophets, as a great earthly monarch, or, in his words, "a great and mighty Lord of the whole earth, and of all nations and armies;" but in opposition to this, John declared his kingdom to be *the kingdom of heaven*, according to the prophets, saying, the kingdom of that *son of David* would be established for ever before him, after his days on earth were fulfilled; that he would be enthroned on the right hand of God, to rule in the midst of his enemies, by his power from thence, in the day of his grace; till his enemies should be made his footstool, in the day of his wrath. And whereas the Jews expected a Jewish kingdom and empire, John proclaimed access to the Messiah's kingdom, by repentance and remission, for any sort of men, even those accounted the most unfit for it, and no admittance into that kingdom otherwise,

therwise, even for those accounted the most fit for it, and the most worthy of the Jewish nation.

3. The Messiah expected by the Jews might be a great prophet teaching them how to make themselves righteous by the deeds of the law, and promoting the righteousness of the law, by all the power of his kingdom; as we see the multitude fed with the loaves, accounting Jesus that great prophet that should come into the world, and ready to take him by force to make him king, when he spake to them of eternal life, asking him, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* And Celsus makes his Jew say, "He will come the judge of the pious, and "the punisher of the unjust." But, as Jesus told the multitude, that he came down from heaven to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world; so John the Baptist, pointing out Jesus as the man, who, coming after him, is preferred before him, because he was before him, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*; and this he said according to that prophecy of Abraham, the father of the faithful, *God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering*. The Messiah of John Baptist, far from being a great earthly prince, and mighty patron of self-righteousness, was a man, no less a person indeed than the Son of God, but sent to bear the punishment of sin for sinners, and so to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and in place of the deliverances the Jews expected by their Messiah, the deliverance that comes by the Messiah of John Baptist, is eternal *salvation by the remission of sins*. Nor is this benefit of the Messiah any way confined to the Jewish nation, but it extends to the whole world; for this Lamb redeems his church, his kingdom, by his own blood, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, without difference; and so the blessing promised to Abraham comes upon all nations through his seed, redeeming them from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them.

N O T E III.

Page 198. and 199. — *What hast thou shewed us egregious or wonderful in word or deed, though called upon in the temple to shew thyself the child of God by some manifest sign? Supposing to be true as many things as are written concerning healings and the resurrection, or concerning a*
Jews

few loaves feeding many, of which many fragments were left; or as many other things as the disciples, speaking marvellously, have narrated; come, let us believe these to be wrought by thee; they are of the same kind with the works of enchanters, as promising more wonderful things, and with the things performed by them that have learned from the Egyptians, giving for a little money, in the midst of the markets, the grand things they have learned, and expelling demons from men, and blowing off diseases, and calling up the souls of heroes, yea, shewing sumptuous suppers and tables, and meats differently dressed, that are not; and as animals moving, not being truly animals, but to the fancy appearing such. Because they do these things, are we therefore to believe them to be the sons of God? or should it not rather be said, that these are the arts of wicked and unhappy men?

Here Celsus makes his Jew treat the divine works wrought by Jesus, much the same way as he did the testimony of John Baptist, comparing the healings to the work of charms; the raising of the dead, to calling up the ghosts of heroes; and the feeding of thousands with a few loaves, to the making appearances of feasts, and of moving animals to the fancy only; as if it were possible for one, supposing what the disciples write of the works of Jesus to be true, to believe them to be of the same nature with these. The account of these works given by the disciples, manifestly excludes all suspicion of charming, or juggling, or magical arts whatsoever. And the miracles of Jesus were so manifest to the Jewish nation, that they have not been able to this day to deny them; for even in their fable, published under the title of *The book of the generation of Jesus*, ascribing his miracles to some great efficacy in the name Jehovah, as a most powerful amulet stolen by him out of the temple, they plainly acknowledge his working miracles, and particularly his raising one from the dead, and curing a leper. Nor could Celsus venture to make his Jew deny the works of Jesus, narrated by his disciples, when he imputed them to the arts that were learned from the Egyptians. But, shewing the utmost effects of these arts, and comparing them with the works of Jesus, even what he says in the comparison, evidently shews them to be of a quite different nature.

Jesus refused the Jews asking of him some miraculous sign of that temporal deliverance and kingdom of this world which they were expecting by the Messiah, like the

signs wrought at their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, and settlement as a free nation in Canaan's land, by cutting off the Canaanites. He would shew them no such sign; but he manifested himself the Son of God by works no less divine, miraculous signs of his heavenly kingdom, and of that eternal salvation which he called sinners to expect from him. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised up by him, even as the prophets had foretold of him. And the Jew of Celsus would make all this, and every other miracle he did, pass for cures wrought by charms, and for representations made to the fancy only of ghosts, and feasts, and moving animals. But, if he could have said any thing more feasible against the divine works of Jesus, and the signs of that eternal salvation in the remission of sins through him, he would most certainly have said it. And thus the Jews, assisted by a great philosopher, in accounting for the miracles of Jesus, come as poorly off as they did, who, against the conviction of their own consciences, that they could not be done without God, imputed them to the prince of the devils.

N O T E IV.

P. 199. *The body of God would not be such an one as shine, — nor would God's body eat such meats as thou: but neither would the body of God use such a voice, nor such a persuasion.*

That living body born of Mary, was believed by Christians to be the soul and body of that divine person, the Son of God; and so he expresses the sense of Christians in his time, when he calls that body the body of God. But they believed, that the Son of God, assuming that animated body as his own, did not cease to be what he always was before, his Godhead being incapable of any change; nor did he endow his human soul and body with any properties of Godhead, whereof, being man, it was incapable; for, otherwise, he would neither have been truly God, nor truly man. But they believed him to be verily both.

The Jew, supposing God to assume a body as his own, contends that it could not be such an one as that of Jesus. And Celsus afterward tells us why, p. 229. "Seeing the
"divine spirit was in a body, it altogether behoved it
"somewhat to excel the rest in greatness, or beauty, or
"strength,

“ strength, or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence : for it is
 “ unaccountable, that what had something divine more
 “ than others, should differ nothing from another ; yet
 “ this differed nothing from another ; but, as ye say, was
 “ little, and hard favoured, and ignoble.” The body of
 the Son of God, though inhabited also by the Holy Ghost,
 did not excel other men in any of these, was not by these
 distinguished from the rest of men, nor was it distin-
 guishable from them by any of the opposite deformities.
 It is true, and Christians said this, that Jesus had none of
 that *form or comeliness* which the Jews desired to see in
 their Messiah, and for the want of which their prophet fore-
 told they would despise and reject him. But, at the same
 time, he was, according to their prophecies, *fairer than*
the sons of men, in that which God regards in man, and is
 most valuable in his sight : for this is that wherein the man
 Christ Jesus excelled all mankind, *Thou hast loved righte-*
ousness, and hated iniquity. And by this he answered
 that great and God-becoming purpose for which that body
 was assumed by the Son of God, as he said to his Father
 when he came into the world, *Sacrifice and offering thou*
wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me : In burnt-
offerings and sin-offerings thou wast not well pleased : Then
said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written
of me), to do thy will, O God ! By the which will we are
sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ
once, says the apostle. What did all the excellencies of
 body that Celsus talks of, signify to this great purpose ?
 And have not such excellencies been found with the most
 atheistical and most wicked men ? Jesus excelled all other
 men in all those graces that were suitable to the great ser-
 vice he was doing, fulfilling all righteousness for sinners,
 fulfilling the divine law that they had broke, glorifying the
 Father on earth, by finishing the work he gave him to do,
 in giving himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, to re-
 deem them from all iniquity, and purging their sins by the
 sacrifice of himself. And when he was rewarded for this
 great service in his human soul and body, wherein he had
 humbled himself unto death, then was his body distinguish-
 ed, as the body of the Son of God, not by any earthly and
 mortal excellency, but by heavenly and immortal glory, e-
 ven that same supercelestial glory wherein the divine maje-
 sty is displayed. And though that body could not be endowed
 with any property of the eternal and unchangeable God-

head, yet it is exalted far above angels, and every name that is named, and, as the beginning of the new creation, excels all the bodily creation in every thing becoming the body of God.

In the days of his flesh, while his body was mortal, he eat and drank as other mortals, and had no taste for the fabulous nectar and ambrosia; nor was the gore from his dead body such as that which Homer feigned to flow from his blessed gods. But the Jew of Celsus says, "That God's body would not eat such meats as did Jesus." And this is explained afterward by Celsus, p. 230. 231. "They who from the prophets make excuse concerning the things of Christ, can indeed say nothing to the purpose, when any thing wicked, or shameful, or impure appears said of the Divinity, or abominable. For what other was it to God to eat mutton and gall, or drink vinegar, than to eat turds? Come then, if the prophets should have foretold, that the great God would serve, or be sick, or die; it behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick; seeing it was foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is God. But prophets would never have foretold this; for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be considered whether it be foretold or not foretold, but if it be a work worthy of God and good. But for the shameful and evil, though all madmen should appear to foretell it, it is incredible." What was wicked, or shameful, or impure, and abominable in God's body eating such meats as did Jesus? There was a figurative fleshly purity enjoined to the Jews, and several sorts of meats pronounced unclean to them in their law. But when the Word was made flesh, his body was pure, even with that same purity of the carnal law. And surely the Jew of Celsus, supposing God to assume a body, could not make the eating of any meat that the divine law made pure and clean, impure, unholy, and unbecoming that body. We hear nothing from the scriptures of Jesus being sick; only that he can be *touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, having been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. And being without that, there was nothing wicked, or shameful, or impure, and abominable about his body; but when he died a sacrifice for sin, holy, harmless, and undefiled, he was not suffered to see corruption, because he was the holy One of God. As to the service he did in the flesh, humbling himself, and becoming

coming obedient to death, even the death of the cross, it was most holy, and made the brightest discovery of the divine holiness that ever was in the world. But that wherein Christians from the beginning beheld the divine goodness and holiness with adoration and the highest praise, worshipping the Lamb that was slain, is by Celsus called evil and unholy. So different are the views that men always had, and still have of Christ crucified! It is utterly incredible with Celsus (however foretold by prophets), that God should take to himself a human body; and what is said of the human soul that animated it, *growing in wisdom, and sorrowful unto death*, must be as incredible. But when he makes his Jew suppose God taking a body, agreeably to the belief of his appearing to Abraham as a man eating and drinking with him, yea, agreeably to the belief of the Gentiles also, concerning their gods coming down to them in the likeness of men, even as they believed the divine generation of several men; should he not have considered, how such a thing as this (that the prophets foretold as really to come to pass) came to be so universally credited among mankind, so contrary to his philosophy, that makes it absolutely incredible and impossible to be foretold but by madmen?

The Jew of Celsus would have the body of God talk as a Jewish scribe, or Celsus would hear from it the language of a sublime orator, or of a subtle philosopher; for he says, p. 229. "It altogether behoved it to excel the rest—in eloquence." And he makes his Jew say of Jesus, p. 204. "He threatens and reproaches without gravity, when he says, *Wo unto you*, and, *I tell ye before*: for in these he openly confesses, that he cannot persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet with a prudent man." But these things wanted by Celsus and his Jew, were indeed below the dignity of the body of God, and most contemptible in his sight, (even as are all the objects of mortal ambition), as being qualifications wherein the most impious and vicious of mankind have excelled, and wherein they may be again excelled by the most wicked demons. But Jesus, to the observation of the multitude, *spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes*; he spoke as they had never heard man speak. And, while he condescended not to orations nor philosophical discourses, *they wondered at all the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*. It became him to speak

He said thus, *Wo unto unto you, and, I tell you before, who could say, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* And the destruction of Jerusalem demonstrated a gravity and efficacy in these his words, infinitely transcending that of oratory, criticism, and philosophical argument. Were not those persuaded, who, upon hearing him say, *Follow me*, left all and followed him? And was not that a voice becoming the body of God, that commanded demons out of the possessed, the winds and raging sea to be still, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to leap and walk, the infirm and sick of the palsy to take up their beds and walk, and the dead to live?

NOTES on the true Discourse of Celsus, tome 1.
sect. 2.

N O T E I.

P. 199. — *What ailed you, O countrymen, that you leave the law of your country? — You made defection from the law of your country. Or how do you begin at our sacred things, but in your progress despise them, not having another beginning of doctrine to speak of than our law? For if any foretold to you, that the child of God would come to men, that was our prophet, and the prophet of our God. — Many others might have appeared, such as was Jesus, to them that would be deceived. And how should we, who have shewed to all men, that one would come from God, punishing the unjust, treat him ignominiously when he came? — Was it that we should be punished more than others?*

This, that Celsus makes his Jew say to the Jewish followers of Jesus, is very true, that they had no other beginning of doctrine but the Jewish law. For Jesus and his apostles testified, saying none other things, but those that Moses and the prophets did say should come, that the Christ should be a sufferer, that he should be the first of the resurrection of the dead, and that so he would shew light to the people, and to the Gentiles. But all that believed Jesus to be that Christ foretold by the prophets, far from despising the law given by Moses, looked on him as the end of that law for righteousness to every believer. Yea, when the Jews that believed left the peculiar covenant God made with their

their nation, with its precepts and ordinances of worship in the worldly sanctuary; they did this in the view of that covenant being abolished by the death of Christ, confirming another new covenant of God with the true Israel of all nations, which had now come in place of it according to the prophecies, expressly foretelling, that God would make a new covenant with his true Israel, not according to that. For this was set before them in that part of the gospel-revelation, that called the Jews off from the Jewish law, and the service of the tabernacle. See Heb. viii. 6.—13. with Jer. xxxi. 31.—34. And this was what ailed them to leave the law of their country, when God was, according to the prophecies, taking away their country, and causing the whole service of the tabernacle to cease by the destruction of their city and temple. The law of their country, being divine, in distinction from all the peculiar laws of other countries, was not to be forsaken by them till they were loosed from the obligation of it by the divine authority, in a new revelation calling them to forsake it. And this new revelation, when it came attended with the taking away of their place and nation, appeared manifestly to have been promised and foretold by Moses the lawgiver, and by the prophets of that same country; so that the believing Jews, in leaving the peculiar precepts of the Jewish law, shewed a regard to the law of their country; hearing the words of the great prophet foretold in that law, which commanded them to hear him under the pain of cutting off. If the bulk of the Jewish nation did not hearken to this new revelation, nor embrace the new covenant foretold by their prophet; even this was the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning them with respect to the promised Messiah: and so their opposition to the truth was rather a confirmation of it: for if Jesus had not been despised and rejected by the Jews, he could not, according to the prophecies, have appeared to be the promised Messiah. Their unbelief, therefore, could not make the faith of God of none effect, as Celsus would make his Jew insinuate, saying, “Why did we despise him whom we have foretold?” For as to the salvation promised to come by their Messiah; their prophet, and the prophet of their God, said expressly, *Though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.* And the consequence of their despising and treating ignominiously the Messiah, whose coming they had foretold to all men, was certainly this, that they were punished

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nished more than others, and this also according to plain predictions of Moses and the prophets. In place of "many" others appearing, such as Jesus; where could Celsus or his Jew find any one coming to the Jewish nation according to all these prophecies, as did Jesus?

N O T E II.

P. 200. — His disciples feigned, that he foreknew and foretold all things whatsoever happened to him. — These things therefore came not to pass in consequence of being foretold; for that is impossible: but, in consequence of their coming to pass, their being foretold is found a lie.

The great pains that Celsus takes to prove the falsehood of this, would import a tacit acknowledgment, that, if it be true that Jesus foreknew and foretold all, as his disciples said, it says something for his Divinity, notwithstanding his being condemned by the Jews, betrayed and denied by his disciples, and led away bound and crucified. The distress this gives him, appears in his turning himself every way, and catching at every shadow, for a proof of the impossibility, and so of the falsehood of it.

He would prove this, first, by the inconsistency he finds in the thing foretold. He says, "How is it credible that he foretold? and how is the dead immortal?" The business of Celsus here was to demonstrate it impossible for him that was the immortal God, and so incapable of death, to take part with us in mortal flesh and blood, or to take to himself a human soul and body, capable of dying, and so to become capable of death in that which is mortal. For supposing it possible for him to assume humanity; there can, then, be no difficulty in telling how he might be mortal in that mortal nature, without ceasing to be immortal in his eternal and unchangeable Divinity. The disciples beheld several evidences of Divinity about this mortal man, particularly his knowledge of the hearts of men, and his foreknowledge of all that befel him; and thereby understood him to be more than man, and acknowledged him to be no less a person than the Son of God, who had condescended to take part with them of flesh and blood, according to the prediction of the prophets, the Father's testimony of him at John's baptism, and the transfiguration, and the works he wrought to shew himself the Son of God. This is far from being like "as if one saying that one is just, should

“ should point him out doing unjustly, and calling him
 “ pious, shew him committing murder, and calling him
 “ immortal, set him forth dead, prefacing to all these
 “ that they came to pass as he foretold.” For the disciples
 never said that what died was immortal; they never said
 that the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, was immortal
 in his human soul and body; but they said, the immortal
 Son of God took to himself a mortal life, which he had
 power to lay down, and to take again from the dead, that he
 might give everlasting life from the dead to mortals. Celsus
 and his Jew have not brought any thing like a proof of the
 impossibility of this; but, on the contrary, have rather esta-
 blished the possibility of it, when (agreeably to the pre-
 vailing notion among both Jews and Gentiles, that God
 might come down to them in the likeness of man) they sup-
 pose that God might appear as a man suffering these things;
 saying, “ For ye do not say this, that he appeared indeed
 “ to ungodly men to suffer these things, yet did not suffer;
 “ but you confess that he suffered openly.” With respect
 to this supposition, might it not be said, How is the invi-
 sible, visible? how doth immensity appear circumscribed,
 and the omnipotent weak? and how doth the immortal ap-
 pear dead? If this prove not the impossibility of the appear-
 ance, how shall it demonstrate the impossibility of the reality?

By the way, here we may observe, that Celsus, who had
 such a particular knowledge of the heretics that went un-
 der the Christian name, and their tenets, knew nothing of
 any who asserted, that Christ suffered only in appearance.
 And so we may reckon that certain heretic, who, as Origen
 says, asserted this, to have come after the time when Celsus
 wrote. The author of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius,
 shews much zeal against this heresy: and therefore it might
 have been broached toward the end of the second century,
 when it is probable these epistles were forged.

Again, the Jew of Celsus would prove the falsehood of
 his foreknowing and foretelling all, as being impossible,
 especially that of his disciples betraying and denying him,
 by such assertions as these, “ No good general and captain
 “ of many myriads was ever betrayed; yea, neither a
 “ wicked chief robber, and commanding those more
 “ wicked than himself, if he appeared useful to his com-
 “ panions. — A man was never yet conspired against by
 “ his table-companion. But he that eat with God became
 “ a conspirator.” Though Jesus appeared neither like a
 Vol. III. O o captain

captain and commander of any army, as the Jews would have their Messiah, nor like a chief robber; yet his disciples, remaining tainted with the Jewish prejudice of a secular Messiah, had some expectation of temporal advantage by him, wherein they were disappointed by his death. But the traitor, who was a thief, and kept the bag, and bare what was put therein, not minding eternal life, as did the rest, when he found that Jesus was not like to be *useful* to him in the gratification of his prevailing passion for money, betrayed him to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver; and so fulfilled what the prophet foretold of the price he would be valued at. Suppose Celsus had never heard of any great and good captain or chief robber betrayed, that was useful to his companions; and therefore thought it impossible; yet how could his Jew say, a man was never conspired against by his table-companion? Was he ignorant of these words of his psalms? *Yea mine own familiar friend which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.* An assertion too loose for one that knew the world, is put in the mouth of a Jew that had divine authority to the contrary! Could not Celsus make his Jew charge a lie on the apostles, without flatly contradicting his own scriptures?

Another proof of this impossibility is this, "What God, or demon, or wise man, foreseeing such things coming upon him, would not shun them if he could, but would fall into the things he certainly knew before?" This is strongly said; but how falsely? For did never any wise man, philosopher, or hero, venture upon certainly foreknown death, when he could shun it? Yet none of those who so submitted to sufferings and death, could propose to themselves such a glorious end as the eternal salvation and redemption of their people from sin and death: for this is what Jesus had in view; as he said, *I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* — *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. — And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.* The story of the disciples, telling he foreknew all these things coming upon him, tells further, that, though he easily could, yet he would by no means shun them. He checked his disciples offering to defend him, when he surrendered himself

self into the hands of his enemies. And even then he shewed such signs of his power, making those who came to take him fall back to the ground by a word said to them, and healing the ear of one of them that had been cut off, as manifested, it was in his power to shun the things coming on him; yet he would not; but said to the disciple defending him with the sword, (the same who afterward denied him), *Put up again thy sword into his place. — Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled; that thus it must be?* And so it was true, as Celsus, it seems, had heard the Christians of his time saying, that “it seemed good to him to suffer these things, and he was punished obeying his Father.” But how then shall the impossibility of his foreknowing and foretelling what came upon him appear?

It would next appear from this: “It is altogether inconsistent, that they who heard before, should yet betray and deny.” And this inconsistency is demonstrated thus, “How, if he foretold, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not yet betray, nor the other deny? But they betrayed and denied, making no account of him.” And thus, “For certainly, even a man conspired against and foreknowing, if he forewarn the conspirators, they will turn away, and take care of themselves.” He that denied, was very confident that though he should die with him, he would not deny him, and this when he was forewarned; yea, he ventured his life for him; yet afterward, surprized and overcome with fear, he did it, even as it was foretold. And he that betrayed, not conspiring with any other disciples, but with the chief priests, as soon as he was discovered, immediately set about delivering him to them in the absence of the multitude. And this he did, as the disciples say, being possessed by the devil for the purpose. It is manifest, he was then neither fearing Jesus as God, nor taking the warning of eternal danger set before him; and he had no temporal danger to fear from Jesus. Now, where is the inconsistency in all this? Is it impossible for one that sees the better things and approves them, yet to follow the worse, blinded by his passions? Doubtless the fear of him, as God, did not influence them to betray and deny. But is it impossible for men, notwithstanding their natural dread of a Deity, to cast off that fear in many in-

stances of their practice? Or is there any thing extraordinary and marvellous in mens acting inconsistently with their own principles? Was no such thing as this ever heard of among the Jews or the philosophers?

Here again we may, by the way, consider this, If Judas the traitor had known any thing of imposture in Jesus, or could have discovered any cheat about the works he wrought to prove himself the Son of God, and he himself had from Jesus the power of working such works; why did he not discover it when he betrayed him? And why did not the chief priests, who got him engaged to guide their guards to take him, make some discovery out of this same Judas, when bringing Jesus before them to be judged and condemned as an impostor? Yea, why did this Judas, after they had condemned Jesus, confess to them, that he had betrayed innocent blood, and in the agony of remorse kill himself?

The last argument to prove the impossibility of this prediction, is, "Being God, he foretold these things: and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass: God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that they should be ungodly and impious. — God himself conspired against his table-companions, making them betrayers and impious."

Such an inference as this hath been often made from the divine predetermination of sinful actions. But this argument, making God the author of sin from his foreknowledge, is a curiosity, to be well observed by them who own the foreknowledge, while they charge this evil upon the decree. Some have been so straitened in reconciling their freedom of will and human merit with the divine prescience, that they have found themselves obliged even to deny that prescience; though the truth of the scripture must go with it, and not that only, but also the perfection of the Deity. And in this, these philosophers under the Christian name, do but follow Celsus, making God the author of sin by his foreknowledge, appearing in foretelling the wicked actions of men. But this, as well as all his other arguments on this head, shews how much he was straitened with that evidence of divinity in Jesus, his foreknowing and foretelling all that befel him. Could not he, with all his philosophy, overthrow this without undoing the divine providence? Could he not deny the divinity of Jesus,

fus, without making it impossible for the Deity to foreknow and foretell the wicked actions of the creatures? For he says, if it were so, God would lead about men to be wicked. Jesus intended by this prediction, that, when it should be fulfilled, his disciples might have a sign of his divinity for the support of their faith against the shock it would receive from his sufferings and death. And so he said to them, when foretelling his being betrayed by one of them, *Now, I tell you before it come to pass, that when it cometh to pass, ye may believe that I am.* Accordingly we see the remembrance of the prediction, as to Peter, revived the faith in him after he had denied his Lord, even as he had foretold. Yea, it fixed conviction upon Judas when he saw him condemned to death, in consequence of his betraying him, according to his prediction: for he was obliged to acknowledge to the chief priests, that he was innocent of the crime of blasphemy for which they condemned him to death, or that it was no blasphemy in him to call himself the Son of God. And this same sign of the divinity of Jesus under his sufferings so embarrasses Celsus, that, to get clear of it, he must reason himself out of the divine providence.

There is something in the fact here very opposite to his reasoning against divine providence about sinful actions. The disciples that betrayed and denied Jesus, were not led about, as he says, by the divine prescience and prediction, to do what was foretold. They were neither constrained and forced, nor tempted and drawn away and enticed, either by the infallible foreknowledge, or by the sure decree declared in the prediction; for they were not at all moved to what they did by any consideration arising from that prediction. Judas was far from minding the fulfilment of it in betraying Jesus, whose divinity appeared again to him, by its being so fulfilled, in such a manner as made him see himself an egregious sinner in what he had done. And Peter, who denied him, was very confident, when he heard the prediction, that it would never be fulfilled by him; and he persisted in his resolution to stand by his master, setting himself to defend him at the hazard of his life, till he was at last surprised and overcome by his fear; so that he was not thinking of the prediction, nor at all influenced by any respect to it in denying his Lord: for after he had done it, then, remembering the words of Jesus foretelling it, and seeing them verified in what he had now done, he went out, and wept bitterly. In all other cases

cases wherein there is no prediction, it is certain, that no man can be either constrained or enticed to sin by that which he cannot have in any view to influence his choice in sinning; for till the event come out, there can be no view of what God foreknew about it; and till the fact be done, the counsel and purpose of providence cannot appear.

As the disciples did not determine themselves, in their choice to betray and to deny, by any respect to the divine counsel and purpose declared in the prediction; so neither, when they had fulfilled it by doing wickedly, did they find fault with the divine providence; but, on the contrary, they took the whole blame to themselves. Judas did not excuse himself nor extenuate his guilt, by the necessity imported in the prediction which he had now fulfilled. And though he found himself cut off from all hope of pardon by these words of the Lord, "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him, but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born:" yet we do not find him saying any thing like this, How did the good God allow me to be born? or, why finds he fault with me, who could not resist his will?

These disciples could not in any such manner reply against the humanity of the Son of God, wherein he was under the law with them: for, by the fulfilled prediction, they perceived his divinity, wherein he was above all law: so that they had no rule to apply to him whereby they could blame him; for the providence of the Creator cannot possibly be subject to any rule for judging the conduct of the creatures. When we transgress the divine law, we therein act, as if we were not subject to it, but above it, as God, and so would be as God, and not as creatures; like what the prophet says of the king of Tyre, setting his heart as the heart of God. And, seeing this is the very nature of sin, non-subjection to the divine law, with what sense would men call him the author of sin? or how shall he be subject to any blame who is under no law? It is adding sin to our sin, for us to presume to judge of his conduct by any rule for us, as if he were subject to the same law with us, and to judge what he should do, from what we his creatures ought to do. We are bound to love him with all our heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. And every action a man doth, that can be called a sin, is, one way or other, a transgression of this divine law,

law, to which the human conscience bears witness. But how shall this law, so proper for creatures, apply to God? Can it, with any possible consistency, be said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, — and — Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself? If men would find fault with him, they must find something for a God above him; they must find neighbours to him.

Peter and Judas had both grievously transgressed this law, and acknowledging themselves sinners, owned that punishment was due to them, notwithstanding the necessity imported in the prediction of their sin. And, as to the conduct of divine providence about this matter, their own consciences, that condemned them as sinners, could tell them, “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to the former, Why hast thou made me thus?” So, in these two sinning disciples, as examples, we may see, that no such replies as men would now make against God, shall find any place at last either among the saved or the damned.

However wickedly Judas did in betraying Jesus, and the Jews in murdering him; yet no Christian from the beginning ever thought of finding fault with God, for delivering him by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge to be so betrayed and murdered. And is not the brightest display of the divine holiness and justice, as well as mercy and grace, still to be beheld in that same matter?

N O T E III.

P. 201. *If these things seemed good to him, and he was punished obeying his Father; it is manifest, that to him, being God, and also willing, these usages, according to his mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why then doth he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the fear of destruction may pass away, saying thus, O Father, if it be possible for this cup to pass?*

He, being God, could not suffer in his Godhead; but he suffered in his human soul, saying, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.”

He was willing, but willing to suffer punishment obeying his Father; and that could not be without grief and trouble.

The usages that Celsus speaks of, were not the cause of his lamenting and grieving: *For he endured the cross, despising*

spising the shame, for the joy that was set before him. And many of his followers have suffered more grievous tortures of body, in their death, than did Jesus, as did also they who believed in him to come under the Old Testament: but they were sustained under these torments with the joyful sense of the divine favour, and with the light of God's countenance, which is the true and proper happiness and life of man, even as the opposite of it is his true and proper misery. For a *man's spirit will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* However mens spirits have sustained the most grievous tortures of body; yet no man's spirit can bear up wounded with a quick sense of divine displeasure and wrath.

It was for this that Jesus lamented and grieved. It was this that made his soul exceeding sorrowful unto death; and it was his agony through this, and not so much the pains inflicted on his body, that killed him. He pointed to his chief pain and the main cause of his death in that complaint on the cross, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And so it was observed, that his death came sooner than it could be expected by the cross, as it was before that of the malefactors crucified with him: *And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead.*

When we suppose a soul loving God, we must think of it as desiring- above all things the light of his countenance, and as having its chief joy and delight in the sense of his favour; and so the sense of divine displeasure and wrath must give such a soul the greatest pain: this cup therefore that the Father gave Jesus to drink, when he was made a curse for sinners, could not but be exceedingly troublesome and extremely grievous to his soul that loved God perfectly; and the great abhorrence he expressed to the hiding of God's face from his soul, was nothing else but the fervency of his love to God. The reason of his lamenting and grieving, was because he loved God with all his heart, soul, and strength.

This gave occasion to that submission to the will of the Father, in the drinking of that cup, which was the perfection of his obedience. For this is the *obedience* that the apostle says, *he learned from the things that he suffered.* He had come to do the will of the Father, making him, who knew no sin, to be a sin-offering for sinners. He had condescended to be wounded for their transgressions; and had received from the Father that commandment, to lay
down

down his life for them. And having received this commandment from him, when his piety now filled him with the greatest aversion to the killing sense of the divine wrath, and the curse of the law seizing on his soul, then he gave the highest instance, the unparallellable instance of submission to the Father, saying, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt;" and, "If this cup may not pass from me, except "I drink it, thy will be done."

He knew the cup, that was so troublesome and grievous to him, would pass away from him, if he should drink it; and not from him alone, but from all those for whom he drank it; and so he did not fear to remain always under his sufferings. He did not put up this prayer in the fear of destruction. He knew himself to be the Son of God, having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. He knew that his Father was hiding his face from his soul *for a moment*, for the sins of those whom he had given him, that *with everlasting loving-kindness he might have mercy on them*; and that, through his *tasting death for them*, he would become their *perfect Saviour* from death. It was not possible that the Son of God, submitting to death, should be holden of it. The divine justice found an infinite satisfaction in his death, from the infinite dignity of the person dying; and therefore Jesus, in that prayer to his Father, presents himself before him as his Son, saying, *O my Father*; and prayed to him as *able to save him from death*, because he was his Son. Therefore he had no fear of destruction; but, according to the prophecy, he could say, "My flesh shall rest in hope: because "thou wilt not leave my soul in the separate state, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption." And even on the cross, where he cried, lamenting and grieving, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* he could promise to the thief, that trusted in him, the happiness of the heavenly Paradise, with him, in the separate state, that same day. So far was he from the fear of destruction.

N O T E IV.

P. 201. *Ye are sophistical, in saying, that the Son of God is the very Logos. If indeed the Logos is to you the Son of God, we also applaud. But after promising the Logos to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and holy Logos, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified.*

If some Christian philosophers, in the time of Celsus, would have the apostle John's Logos, or Word, to be no other than the Logos of Plato, and said their Son of God was the very same with the Logos of that philosopher; Celsus might well call them sophistical in saying so, when he thought of them as studying, by that artifice, to catch the philosophers. But they deceived themselves; taking up with Plato's Logos in place of the Logos of the scriptures, they lost the true knowledge of the Son of God.

As to what he says of the Jews agreeing with Christians, that the Son of God is the Logos, or Word; he had some foundation for this in the writings of Philo the Jew, which probably he might have read. But if he had been acquainted with the use and application of the Memra or Word in the Chaldee paraphrase, well known to those Jews who heard it read in their synagogues, with whom Celsus might have conversed about Phenice and Palestine, *p.* 230. he would then have had sufficient ground for saying, in the name of his Jew, We agree that the Word is the Son of God.

The disciples shewed a man for the Logos or Word, that was in the beginning with God, and was God, that Word by whom all things were made; but a man, who, by speaking a word, calmed the winds and the sea, and raised the dead to life. And they believed this man to be no other person but he whose working in the creation Moses had represented, by speaking in this manner, "God said, Let there be light, and there was light;" the same who "upholds, by the word of his power, all things," even as they came into being at first by his word; whose name is therefore called *the Word of God*. The disciples set forth this man as that same Word made flesh, and said, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

But when Celsus makes his Jew say to the disciples of Jesus, "Ye shew us, not a pure and holy Word, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified;" however he keep up to the character of his Jew, yet he quite forgets the philosopher representing him: for might he have been that pure and holy Word, if he had been a most noble and highly honoured man, and placed in a situation among men, the most opposite to contempt and affliction? and is this the philosopher's purity and holiness?

NOTE

NOTE V.

P. 202. *Do ye thus accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these things for the help of men, and that we might despise punishments?*

What is here said of his suffering these things for the help of men, is all the notice Celsus takes of the great salvation that the Christians of his time ascribed to the death of Christ. Their account of the help that men have from Christ's sufferings, is more fully set forth in the epistle to Diognetus, by some Christian who wrote in that second century, and expressed the common sense Christians then had of that matter, in this manner: — "That, in that time, being demonstrated, from our own works, unworthy of eternal life, we might now be made worthy by the benignity of God; and being manifested in ourselves incapable to enter into the kingdom of God, we might be made capable by the power of God. Now, when our iniquity was fulfilled, and it had been fully manifested, that punishment is the wages of sin, and death was expected, — he gave his own Son a price of redemption for us, the holy One for transgressors of the law, the innocent for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal: for what else than his righteousness was able to cover our sins? In whom is it possible for us the transgressors and ungodly to be justified, but in the Son of God alone? O the sweet exchange! O the unsearchable device! O the unexpected benefits! that the disobedience of many should be covered in a righteous one; and the righteousness of one should justify many transgressors! Having therefore in the former time proved the incapacity of our nature to attain life, and now having shewed the Saviour able to save even the incapables; from both he would have us to believe his goodness."

As Celsus had no view of our need of this help, he makes nothing of it, nor of what he reports from the Christians of his time, when he introduces them speaking thus, "We were induced (to esteem him the Son of God) by this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness." They learned to say this from their scriptures, teaching them in this manner, *Forasmuch*

then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And again, — Sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. — The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. These things are said of him according to that most ancient oracle, setting him forth as “the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, “bruising his heel,” which was delivered in consequence of the devil’s tempting the first man to sin by the woman whom he seduced, using the serpent as his instrument, and so bringing sin and death into the world of mankind. Now, though Celsus makes no more of Christ suffering for this great purpose, of which he had heard, than of any other suffering punishment, or of a punished robber and murderer; yet Christians found in themselves the help to men that is in his sufferings, and knew that his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness: for they found their consciences purged from the guilt of their sins, and themselves freed from slavery to their ungodly lusts, and delivered from the fear of death, the wages of sin, by what they believed of the Son of God suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and dying that we might live through him.

And it was in this same view of his sufferings, that they learned from them to despise punishments. For so did they learn by their scriptures, saying to them, *If when ye do well and suffer, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God: for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin, — who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.* And, *It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing: for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* And again, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.* And indeed no other men can be ambitious to be made conformable to Christ’s death, if by
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any means they may attain the resurrection of the dead, but they only who count all things loss to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of him. Before the disciples had Christ's sufferings in this view, and while they did not yet know this design of his passion, it is no wonder if, as Celsus observes, they, "seeing him punished and dying, neither "suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments, but even denied that they "were disciples." But when they came to know that he had destroyed him who had the power of death, and were delivered from bondage through fear of death, by his dying, and hoped for eternal life through his death; then, to the astonishment of Celsus, multitudes were persuaded to die with him, as he says, "Yet now ye die with him. — If "living he persuaded none, but when he is dead, they "that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd!"

NOTE VI.

P. 202. *Surely ye will not say of him, that, not having persuaded those who are here, he withdrew to Hades, persuading them that are there.*

If Celsus could not perceive, at the time of his writing, that Christians would say this, and was confident they would not say it; they came to say it not very long after, when Irenæus wrote: for he imagined, and wrote somethings to this purpose *, That our Saviour descended into Hades to preach the faith there unto the patriarchs, and to the ancient just men, as well Jews as Gentiles, and that they that believed at his preaching, should be reckoned in the number of the saints. If Celsus had been to write after this, when it came to be commonly said, even as Origen affirms it against him; he could not have been so positive, that they would not say it.

NOTE VII.

P. 202. & 203. *By what reasoning were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God? — We esteem him to be the Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and (as*

* Irenæus adv. heres. lib. 4. cap. 39. & 45.

ye say) raised the dead. O light and truth! With his own voice he hath expressly confessed, according as ye also have written, Wherefore there shall come to you others also using the like powers, wicked men and impostors: and he names one Satan the worker of these things. So that he denies not, that these things are indeed nothing divine, but the works of the wicked. And being forced by the truth, he hath at once revealed the things of others, and reproved his own things. How is it not then miserable, from the same works to reckon one God, and others impostors? For why from these things should we rather think others evil than him, using his own testimony? For he himself hath indeed confessed these things not of a divine nature, but to be the marks of deceivers and very wicked men.

If there be any of this light and truth, so surprisingly discovered by Celsus and his Jew, to be seen here; it must appear only from this assertion, that Jesus expressly confessed, that wicked men, impostors, and Satan, would come using the like powers, and working the same works with those whereby he proved himself the Son of God; and that these same works are the marks of deceivers and very wicked men. And, as there is no ground for this assertion, but only in what the disciples of Jesus had written, if no such express confession of his can be found in their scriptures; then we must cry out in the surprise of disappointment, O darkness and falsehood! for is it any where written in the Christian scriptures, that Jesus said there would come impostors curing the lame and blind, as he did, and raising the dead? These are the works of which Celsus is speaking, as inducing Christians to esteem him the Son of God. Did Jesus say, Satan would be the worker of these even as he was? On the contrary, it is written, that he said to the Jews, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not;* and that he said of the unbelieving Jews, to his disciples, *If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin.*

It is indeed truth that he hath expressly foretold, *There shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* Even as Moses signified to the Jews in their law, there would arise prophets, or dreamers of dreams, giving them signs or wonders, that might come to pass, to lead them after other gods, by which their God would prove them whether they loved him, Deut. xiii. 1.—5.

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But, as Moses did not foretell that these false prophets would use the like powers, and do the same works by which God manifested and distinguished himself when he brought them from Egypt; so neither did Jesus foretell that these false christs and prophets, shewing great signs and wonders to deceive, would use the like powers and do the same works that he did to manifest himself the Son of God, particularly in impowering the lame to walk, giving eyes to the born blind, as he did, and restoring the dead to life. And as those works he did among the Jews were such as no other man did; so it cannot be found, that any false christ or false prophet hath arisen after him doing the same works. Did any false prophet or false christ ever shew a man fixed to his bed by infirmity for thirty-eight years, such an impotent man, rising instantly at his call, taking up his bed, and walking under it? Or hath any such shewer of signs and wonders imitated that notable miracle wrought in the name of Jesus, by the witnesses of his resurrection, upon the man born lame, to the conviction of all that dwelt in Jerusalem, so that the council of the Jewith nation could not deny it? Acts iii. and iv. though they would not admit the truth of his resurrection, and the power of his name to save, evidently therein manifested. Hath any come after Jesus, making eyes of clay to one born blind, and causing him see with these, (shewing himself the same that formed man's body at first from the ground, and inspired him with life), as Jesus did to that blind man, (John ix.), in whom the truth of this divine work was demonstrated before the rulers of the Jewith synagogue, who could not deny the work of God, but cast out the poor man for maintaining, that Jesus, who gave him eyes to see, was of God? And did ever any false christ or false prophet come shewing the manifestly dead, evidently called back to life by his word, as Jesus did the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus?

Neither Moses nor Jesus denied the power of magicians and demons to shew signs and wonders, though they denied them the power of working the works of God, who raiseth the dead, and calleth the things that be not as though they were. Celsus, who knew no God above nature, could not acknowledge the works of this God before whom Abraham believed, and whom the scriptures of the Jews and Christians set forth as the Creator, calling beings out of nothing, and making the dead alive; and therefore looked
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on all pretences to any such works, as imposition, deceit, and juggling. But, as no Jew, speaking in character, is like Josephus, Vespasian's prophet, who believed the foretold Messiah of the Jews to be the Roman Emperor, that came to take away their place and nation, and who dissembled the miracles of Moses, even the dividing of the Red sea, making Moses such another lawgiver, as Minos, and other wise politicians among the Greeks; it was not at all proper for Celsus to put his boast of light and truth in the mouth of a Jew, who must be supposed to believe the signs and wonders wrought by Moses to be the works of the true God, clearly manifested and distinguished by them, notwithstanding the Egyptian magicians doing the like to some of these works, and notwithstanding false prophets arising in the nation of the Jews, shewing signs and wonders to draw them away from their wonder-working God. The scriptures of the Jews, as well as those of the Christians, setting forth the true God as above nature, controlling it at his pleasure, making the dead alive, and calling nothings as beings, do, at the same time, plainly allow the power of demons, and their magicians to shew signs and wonders above human power, above all merely human arts of juggling, and even like some of those wonders whereby the true God manifests himself; as in the case of the magicians of Egypt, doing things with their enchantments like those done by Moses in the name of God. But they did not go the full length, and were obliged to own themselves far outdone by the divine power evidently manifested. Even so demons, in opposition to the gospel, might shew signs and wonders, like some of those done by Jesus and the apostles in his name; but they were also outdone, even in those things which they did; and the difference betwixt the works of divine power, and of their power, is manifest. Demons might see farther than the wisest of the Jewish nation could see into the prophecies of the Old Testament, and so, perceiving clearly the divine works of Jesus, know him to be the Christ the Son of God, which the Jews could not know, as the soothsaying woman of Philippi knew the apostles serving God, in shewing the way of salvation; but even in giving out this with a malicious design they were quelled by the power of Jesus. They, by long experience, and knowledge of the course of the world, having understandings as much superior to men as their power is, may see much farther into futurity than

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men can do (though they know not what God will do any further than he has declared), and they may communicate such foreknowledge to their servants, and make them like prophets; but what is all such prophecy to the prophecies of Jesus concerning all things that befel him, and his disciples after him, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and concerning the coming of Antichrist? The servants of demons in collusion might cast them out, or demons of superior power might command their inferiors to depart, as the Jews, observing a manifest superiority of power in Jesus ejecting them, would ascribe it to the prince of demons. There were exorcists among the Jews who cast them out, and some of these attempted to do this in the name of Jesus. But he cast them out, as no other could do, as he said, *with the finger of God*; referring to what the magicians of Egypt were obliged to own, as to the miracles of Moses which they had been labouring to imitate.

It is also truth, that the apostle of Jesus foretold, as we have it written, that the coming of Antichrist would be *with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie, after the working of Satan*, and that by men opposing the truth, as the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses. But he also foretold, that they would reach no further, and proceed to no more, with respect to the miracles wrought in confirmation of the gospel, than the Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres, did with respect to the miracles of Moses: He says, *They shall not proceed to more: for their folly shall be manifest to all, as theirs also was*. So far is it from being written, that Jesus, or his apostles in his name, ever confessed that the power of Satan would work the same works that Jesus wrought to shew himself the Son of God. And now, after what was foretold of the signs and wonders of Antichrist hath come to pass, it appears manifestly, they no more came up to the signs and wonders of the gospel, than those things done by the enchantments of the Egyptian magicians came up to the signs and wonders of Moses.

NOTE VIII.

P. 203. — *But to you his voice, when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe of the drama.*

His loud voice when he expired on the cross was extraordinary;

dinary; especially his saying with that voice, *It is finished*, as one shouting for victory, and with that voice confidently commending his spirit into the hands of God, as his Father. This, together with the earthquake, when he expired, rending the vail of the temple and the rocks, and opening the tombs, and the darkening of the sun, at full moon for three hours, when he was pining to death on the cross, so affected the centurion, and them that were with him watching Jesus, that they were obliged to acknowledge him a righteous man, or that he had done nothing unrighteous in calling himself the Son of God. And the multitude that came together to that sight, were so impressed with this same catastrophe, that they returned from it smiting their breasts. Thus his loud voice expiring, and the earthquake, and the darkness, forced a conviction upon both Jews and Gentiles, and drew a confession from them of his being unjustly condemned for calling himself the Son of God, as he had done, and as he now did, with a loud voice expiring. But the penitent thief confessed him in another manner: and what passed betwixt him and Jesus, could not but make a great impression on the minds of the spectators, as well as the expiring loud voice, the earthquake, and the darkness. While they beheld Jesus crucified in weakness, they saw the crucified malefactor supplicating him as the Lord on the way to his kingdom beyond death, and confiding in him as able to save him eternally, and make him happy in that kingdom after death. And they saw Jesus answering him in the language of the sovereign disposer of the state of men after death, and assuring him of happiness with him immediately in the separate state. And this may serve as an answer to Celsus's question, *What noble thing did Jesus as God, despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel him? He said not as the Bacchus of Euripides, The demon himself shall loose me when I will.* He said nothing like this, but he said what was much more grand, and more becoming God. Even on the cross, and dying, he shewed himself to the malefactor crucified with him, as the Lord on his way to his heavenly kingdom, wherein he was able to make him eternally happy, and brought his mind to rest on his promise to take him with him. He spoke as the Lord of the dead and living, as having death and the separate state at his disposal.

NOTE IX.

P. 203. & 204. *Yea, that living indeed he could not help himself, but being dead he arose, and shewed the marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been pierced. Who saw this? A mad woman, as ye say; and if there was any other of that same magical gang, either in some sort dreaming, and disposed to be deceived, by fancying an apparition (which has often happened to very many), or rather inclining to astonish the rest by such a wonder; and, by such a lie, to give occasion to the other impostors. — When he was disbelieved in the body, he preached to all freely; but when he was exhibiting strong faith, being risen from the dead, he appears in private to a single woman, and to his intimate companions. When he suffered punishment, he was indeed seen to all; but rising, to one; whereof the contrary ought to have been.*

Whoever has given any attention to the evidence of Christ's resurrection plainly set forth in the New Testament, must be surprised at a philosopher like Celsus, juggling and trifling in this manner upon the very hinge on which his whole controversy with the Christians should have turned. For if he could have disproved this fact, he had no more to do in the confutation of Christianity; and while the truth of it stands, nothing can be said to any purpose against the Christian religion. It is true he could not put his Atheistical thoughts of the impossibility of the resurrection in the mouth of his Jew, whom he makes confess the possibility of it in this manner, "We hope surely to rise in the body, and to have eternal life, and that the Sent unto us will be the pattern and first leader of this; shewing, that it is not impossible with God to raise any man with the body. Where is he then, that we may see and believe?" And it was to no purpose to talk of the incredibility of God's raising the dead to Christians, who believed in the same God before whom Abraham believed, as "making the dead alive, and calling those things which be not, as though they were," even the creator of the world from nothing, and the former of man from the dust of the ground, inspiring it with a living soul. His business therefore was to overthrow the evidence for the fact, as it lay before him in the apostolic writings, from which he proposes to confute Christians in

this manner, "From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witnesses; for ye fall in your own snare."

But, in place of this, he appears here as afraid to look that evidence full in the face. Yea, he is careful to hide it, drawing a vail over it, while he represents the truth of the resurrection as standing on the testimony of a mad woman, and of somebody dreaming and disposed to be deceived by an apparition. As to the chosen witnesses, who appear evidently very far from being disposed to be imposed on, or to impose on others, who testified none other things but what Moses and the prophets did say should come, and to whom God bare witness with divers signs, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; Celsus would have their testimony pass, with them that are disposed to take his word upon it, for a lie, contrived and propagated by magicians or jugglers. But the evidence of Christ's resurrection has been so clearly set forth and defended against all the cavils of modern infidels in the *Trial of the witnesses*, and the *Defence of it*, and by *West on the resurrection*, and others, that to any who may read these, it would be quite superfluous to say any thing about it.

N O T E X.

P. 203. & 204. *If Jesus would really declare his divine power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him ill, and to him that condemned him, and indeed unto all. — Where is he then, that we may see and believe? Or, did he descend for this, that we might not believe?*

It was never the design of his coming to the Jews, that he should be acknowledged by that nation; for their prophets foretold the contrary. His resurrection, designed for the eternal salvation of sinners out of every nation, was shewed, by many infallible proofs, to witnesses chosen of God to testify it every where, for the salvation of all that should believe that testimony throughout the world. And they were ordered to begin at Jerusalem, where it was made notour, 1. By the descent of the Holy Ghost concurring with their testimony, to the conviction of thousands of the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 2. By the manifest miracle of healing, wrought in the name of Jesus by these witnesses converting more thousands, and their bold testimony before the grand council of the Jewish nation,

nation, Acts iii. iv. & v. 3. By the appearance of Stephen before the council, beholding his face as the face of an angel, and hearing him declare his seeing heaven opened, and Jesus the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, and confidently commend his departing spirit into his hands, Acts vii.

N O T E I. on sect. III. tome I.

P. 208. *They who call to other mysteries, proclaim before these things, Whoever is pure in hands and prudent in speech; and again others, Whoever is pure from every crime, and whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and whose lived well and justly: and these things they proclaim before, who promise the purgations of sins. But let us hear now whom these call: Whoever, they say, is a sinner, whoever is without understanding, whoever is childish, and, to say plainly, whoever is wretched, the kingdom of God will receive him. The sinner then, do ye not say, that he is the unjust, and the thief, and the breaker through of walls, and the poisoner, and the committer of sacrilege, and the breaker into tombs? whom else would one, proclaiming before, call to be robbers?*

It is surprising, that the philosopher did not advert to the absurdity of calling none to the purgations of sins, but those who have no use for them, and debarring those who alone are fit for them. For who but sinners are capable of purgations of sins? And is not this like calling the whole, not the sick, to come to the physician and be cured? The Christian preachers in his time, whom he would ridicule, and who, by his testimony, seem to have been very different from most preachers now, were far more consistent, giving the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins to sinful, ignorant, wretched men.

The Jews, expecting the kingdom of God, looked for Messiah the King, as Celsus says for them, "the judge of the pious, and the punisher of the unjust;" and supposed they would be received into his kingdom according to their own righteousness, on which they valued themselves above others not so fit for it, as being greater sinners. But Christ's forerunner, who began the preaching of that kingdom, came to them preaching repentance and remission of their sins, and thereby shewing them, that the kingdom
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of God would receive none but sinners needing that repentance and remission. And Jesus told them who had the best character among the Jews, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you;" and, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

For he came not to direct and assist them to work out a righteousness for themselves by any obedience they might give to the divine law; but, supposing them sinners already condemned by that law for every transgression, even in the thoughts and intents of their hearts, he said he came to give his life a ransom, his flesh and blood a sacrifice for such, and to make them righteous, by fulfilling the law, by fulfilling all righteousness for them. And he shewed them, that they were not to have eternal life by their working, but by believing this, by believing on him the Son of God, sent by the Father, to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world. He came not to slacken the demand of the perfect law, requiring love to God with all the heart, soul, and strength, and love to our neighbour as ourselves, or to make less than that perfection accepted as a man's righteousness, nor to loose the just connection betwixt every shortcoming of that perfection, and the curse of God. But he came to fulfil that law for sinners, and thereby to manifest the divine justice in forgiving and justifying them. The Son of God glorified the Father's name by finishing the work he gave him to do, and fulfilling the commandment he received from him, to lay down his life for sinners, and to take it again. He thereby declared his name as righteous, punishing every transgression of his righteous law, and gloriously rewarding perfect obedience; and at the same time he declared his name as merciful and gracious, manifesting God to be love, in giving the Son to be the propitiation for sins, and thereby having mercy on whom he will of the guilty and the wretched, the only proper and meet objects for mercy and grace.

The gospel calls all sorts of sinners, without distinction, to repent, or turn to this God, whom they knew not, believing in the blood of his Son shed for the purgation of all sins. And so Jesus, sending his apostles to testify his resurrection, ordered them to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. When they began there, they preached this repentance and this remission, first, to them, whom they convicted
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of the greatest wickedness, taking, and by wicked hands crucifying and slaying the Messiah. And they set him forth as exalted by the right hand of God, a Prince and Saviour to give them repentance and remission of sins. Then among the Gentiles, the apostle makes this account of those who were called to the kingdom of God, and who were received into it: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Though such be thus purged from their sins, and so received into the kingdom of God, they are not yet innocent, their souls are still conscious of many evils; and so they yet need the purgations of sins in all their approaches to their God in his worship: for now looking into his perfect law, they find themselves coming far short of the required perfection, and offending in many things; and so needing, as the Lord directs them, to ask daily of his Father the remission of their sins. And for this every one that is godly, or that serves the living and true God, prays to him. But the pure in their own eyes, who approach trusting in themselves that they are righteous and despising others, even such as those whom Celsus holds only for sinners, are not worshipping the true God, but an idol. And the God of this world seeketh such worshippers.

NOTE II.

P. 208. *They dictate, that God will receive an unjust man, if he humble himself under his wretchedness; but the just, if he look up to him with virtue from the beginning, him he will not receive. — They commonly say, that God can do all things; but he will not do any thing unjust. So then, like unto them that are subject to compassion, God, being subject to commiseration of those that plead pity, relieves the bad, and the good, doing no such thing, he rejects.*

Though Celsus cannot get it denied, that mankind is someway naturally disposed to sin, and that all sin; yet, at
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the same time, he would say, that some are just and without sin. But the Christian doctrine, to which he objects from this presumption, supposes that the law of God being the only rule of righteousness before him, there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not. The man that doth these things shall live in them. But there is none that doth good, no not one: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And there is no plea upon the distinction of more and less sinners before God, with whom he that offends in one point, is guilty of all, and whose curse is upon every one that continues not in all things commanded, to do them. Before him then a man cannot be justified by pleading, that he is not so bad as other men, or that he humbles himself under his wretchedness more than they, or by his pleading pity while others do no such thing. Yea, it is a great affront offered to his justice and righteous law, to propose to be accepted as righteous in his sight without perfect righteousness, or to be received into favour with him passing any sin unpunished.

Though the Son of God, by becoming man, became subject to the human passion of pity, (weeping over Jerusalem), yet he doth not at all judge by that, nor is the Deity subject to commiseration of those that plead pity. But God is no less merciful than just. He is the God of all grace, according to the gospel, that declares him to be love manifested in sending the Son, the propitiation for sin. The Son of God was sent forth, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them, and to fulfil all righteousness for them, as their representative before his Father, that, by his righteousness imputed to them, as their sins were to him, they might be accepted and taken into favour as God's children, being accepted in the beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Agreeably to this, all sorts of sinners, without any difference, find acceptance with the infinitely merciful and just, pleading guilty, and asking forgiveness and acceptance through the propitiation that mercy provided for declaring the divine justice in the justification of sinners. Thus the publican is represented as addressing God, and so received into his favour rather than the Pharisee, who pleaded his
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own fitness for acceptance rather than the publican; though he was thankful to God for the difference.

This is that against which Celsus would here object, as a remarkable tenet of the Christians in his time. And however it be misunderstood or misrepresented by him to fit out his objection against them; yet, from what he here says, we may easily perceive what was the general and notour sense of Christians in his time about justification and acceptance with God. And though this doctrine of acceptance with God, not proceeding on any thing in one man that distinguishes him from another as more acceptable, be full as disagreeable to the generality of our Christian world as it was to Celsus; yet it is very agreeable to the apostolic account of the matter, Rom. iii. 19.—31. “Now we
 “know that whatsoever things the law saith, it speak-
 “eth to them who are under the law; that every mouth
 “may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty
 “before God. Wherefore of the deeds of the law shall
 “no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the
 “knowledge of sin. But now, without the law, the right-
 “eousness of God is manifested, being witnessed from the
 “law and the prophets; but the righteousness of God by
 “faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that be-
 “lieve; for there is no difference. For all have sinned,
 “and come short of the glory of God; being freely justi-
 “fied in his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ
 “Jesus; whom God proposed a propitiation by the faith
 “in his blood, unto the manifestation of his justice, for
 “the passing over of the sins that were before in the for-
 “bearance of God, toward the manifestation of his justice
 “in the time that is now; that he might be just, and the
 “justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus. Where is
 “boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works?
 “Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude,
 “that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the
 “law. Is he the God of the Jews only; but not also of
 “the nations? Yes, of the nations also; seeing God is
 “one, who shall justify the circumcision of faith, and
 “uncircumcision by the faith. Do we then make void
 “the law by the faith? Far be it! but we establish the law.

A Letter to a Minister of the Established Church, in answer to one from him, on FORBEARANCE.

[Never before printed.]

S I R,

June 24. 1740.

HOW much am I obliged to you for the great pains you have taken to instruct me about forbearance, in your charitable forbearing letter to me? However little I profit by it, your labour and travel for me is nothing the less to be considered.

But my hopes of being set right by what you say on forbearance, were much blasted, by your telling me in the entry, that you cannot, let you do your best, gather what is my real sober sense and mind of that doctrine: for then, thought I, my kind corrector labours under a great disadvantage in dealing with me. How hard a case is it, that the woful darkness of my writing style lets nothing of my mind appear to my good friends, but a smothered fierceness, and exposes me so much to be mistaken, and even misrepresented by the most charitable men!

Through this lamentable defect in me, I am likewise rendered incapable of coming up to the fine terms you propose for my remarking upon yours to edification. I must write with the same plainness and openness wherein you have given me your view, and by all means without fierceness. By what I am always told, it would appear I am not at all fit for this; I was not made for it, and therefore I should by all means let it alone.

Nor is this all; I am afraid of remarking on what I do not understand. For however plainly and openly you have laid before me the view and sense you have settled in, after searching the scriptures the best you could; I would have manifold questions to ask before I could form any such notion of your forbearance, as would fit me for making agreeable edifying remarks upon it, or yet state it so in my own mind, as to be able to reduce it to a practice agreeable to the true uniting word of the apostles.

I have not the least reason to doubt, that charity imitates
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the divine long-suffering and kindness, the kindness and long-suffering of Jesus Christ, his long-suffering towards the elect, and the world for their sakes, whom he will have all to come to repentance and acknowledgment of the truth, his long-suffering toward every son whom he receiveth, and even in chastening them; for what son is he whom the father chastens not? And Jesus rebukes and chastens as many as he loves, that they may be zealous and repent, and so be preserved from being spued out of his mouth. And I am very clear, that forbearance among brethren in love, is not a temporary, but standing law of the gospel, whatever was the occasion of giving it out at first; and that this law of forbearance must be diligently observed in the whole instituted discipline, which shews much of the divine goodness and forbearance to his people. Both discipline and forbearance are standing laws of the New Testament; though, as to use and practice, as much obsolete, as several other commandments of the Lord Jesus, which, having no other authority but his, appear in the Christian world, as if they had been calculated only for the time of the apostles. And now when forbearance comes to be taken for *forbearing discipline*, as to some commandments of the Lord Jesus, or some things that he once commanded the apostles to teach his disciples to observe; here I begin to be a little fearful and cautious for the sake of the instituted discipline and commands which Christ laid on his first followers, lest some such damage should follow upon this modern sense of forbearance, as has followed on the modern sense of the law for *decency and order*; and in stating my notion of forbearance, I would be not a little inquisitive and watchful, against hurting discipline by forbearance, or forbearance by the discipline, especially where the objects come to be the same, *viz.* the brethren.

I have not the least reason to question, that, after your best search of the scriptures, you are most firmly persuaded, your view and sense of forbearance is the very law of forbearance. But may I not expect, from your charity and forbearance, some pity and compassion to my fear and caution, at least for a while; and that you will not say of any thing that drops from me, inconsistent with your view and sense of forbearance, that it is a setting aside of Christ's standing law, and making it temporary, and that it is a speaking evil of, and judging his law? For this would be a pretty severe way of imposing your view and sense of that

law upon me, who must still distinguish it from that law, till I can see, by searching the scriptures, that they are utterly the same. You have searched the best you could, and so are fully fixed, I suppose; I am but searching, and, by observing the use that is made of these great names *Charity* and *Forbearance* in the Christian world, and even the polite world, I own I have been put a little upon my guard in the inquiry; as I have been likewise, by taking notice how charity and forbearance have been made an engine to bind Christ's disciples, where he has left them plainly free, and to loose them where he has bound them by plain commands. My mind is indeed changed a little about the sense of his law of forbearance, so that I cannot settle in the common notion; and, for ought I know, it may change further, when I am more satisfied as to the many questions that offer themselves to me in my search. But I am resolved to hold by forbearance, as a standing law.

As to your forbearance of the discipline among brethren, I would need to be more plainly told your character of a brother, or object of brotherly love; and if that take in his appearing to be a believer in Christ through the word of his apostles, by the subjection of his conscience in all things to that word; and if that word be not the only rule we have for distinguishing and knowing the one spirit, and the least measure of true light.

I would need likewise to be more distinctly informed, than I am like to be soon, of the limits that must be set, according to that word, betwixt forbearable things and not forbearable; because, if this be left to the best judgment of every Christian and church, as answerable, how shall they answer to Christ upon what he has not determined to them? And if every one set his own bounds according to his degree of light in the one faith, here is such a source of differences about things to be borne with, that it would be very hard to say, what the bond of peace is; and it behoved forbearance itself to become a matter of forbearance. I can only say I never see a law of the gospel so loose, and so perplexed, and puzzling, as this comes to; and when I see the gospel-forgiveness as it is, I am sure I shall see a plain, simple, fixed, settled thing.

I would be content further to have my mind at rest upon this, whether forgiveness attends upon revelation and holds pace with it, as it is less or more clear and full; or, whether it hinges upon illumination, of manifold degrees, in
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the knowledge of that revelation? And if it shall be the last of these, in opposition to the first, a multitude of questions will arise in my mind about that illumination, and likewise the degrees of it; and with them many jealousies and fears; because when I have heard the forbearables, on the footing of degrees of light, condescended on and particularly mentioned, they have happened always to be such things as had nothing on their side to recommend them but only revelation; and I seldom hear forbearance demanded upon things that have some other superadded authority to support them, which makes them more generally acknowledged. But if bare revelation be thus in danger, what will become of that forbearance that has no other foundation to me but revelation? Though my fears may seem unreasonable and weak, you have Christian tenderness and compassion enough to bear with me in my weakness; nor will you, I am sure, take it amiss, that I hesitate a little upon this, whether the same regard and tenderness be due to a conscience bound by the doctrines and commands of men, as to one bound by an express law of the Lord, and not yet finding itself loosed by the same authority?

Because the forbearance of discipline, as to several commandments of the New Testament, serves to the beautiful purpose of making the access to the Lord's supper free to all the members of Christ's one body, in all their various degrees of light and measures of the same spirit, even as free as the access to the one baptism; I suppose every one that may be baptized, may, without more, eat the one bread, and receive it singly, and by himself alone, as in baptism; and, not having light (through the prejudices of education, &c.) to receive the cup, ought to be admitted to the bread without it. For would it not sound harsh, would it bear telling, to hinder a member of the one body from the one bread, as his light allowed him to take it? And here again I begin to be apprehensive about the church-order instituted in the New Testament, and to be afraid, that I must give up with such churches as those to which the apostles delivered the Lord's supper, that every one of them might partake of it, all the members coming together, with one accord, in one place, to partake of that cup and that one bread, as one body, and so one bread. I say, I fear I must forbear this old institution, that few of the members of the one body have now light for, and allow every baptizer to give
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the one bread, as he does baptism, to every member of the one body that will take it from him. This would indeed put an end to the divisions about the Lord's supper; and you know Christians are divided about nothing more, than they are about the manner of that ordinance. But loath am I to sacrifice my old churches to this forbearance and unity. Yet still there are churches of several sorts, where the members of Christ's body are eating that bread, in the way proper to the church in which they happen to be. And though these churches appear corrupt, and not like the first churches of the saints, yet it seems they are not so far degenerated, as that the members of Christ can agree to call them Antichristian or Babylonish, or deny them to be true churches of Christ. And, for my part, I am most firmly persuaded, there is not the least warrant or precedent in scripture for separating from a church, whatever corruptions be in it, while it remains a true church, and cannot justly be called antichristian and false. As I am very positive in this, I am not able to see, how churches can be gathered out of these churches by those who cannot deny them to be true churches, nor dare to call them antichristian. This would be the most hainous breach of your law of forbearance that I can possibly think of. And according to any glimmering view I have of the law of forbearance, such have far less claim to be borne with, than they who separate from a church and come out of it, because they are firmly persuaded, and boldly profess that it is antichristian. But if these last shall be found to be also quite out of the way of charity and forbearance, we must, it seems, for forbearance sake, even be doing with any church where our lot is cast; and so farewell my dear old churches of the saints, where the blessed old charity and forbearance was not boasted of, but practised in its power. Permit me, Sir, here to drop a tear at the thought of parting with the most desirable thing to me on the earth. My lovely churches of the saints! how amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! O dwelling-places of Mount Sion, shall I forget you? Yea, God do so to me, and more also, if ought but death separate you and me. Well, I think I am glad, I am resolved; and may the most gracious and powerful shepherd of these flocks keep me at it. And now, Sir, let any man of reverence and worth that pleases glory over me with scornful pity, as being far nearer to Christ in charitable forbearance than I, I shall yet hope

hope not to be quite out of sight of him in cleaving to his churches.

Now, Sir, I hope you will be so good as excuse my not answering your letter, nor remarking upon it for the above reasons. And to shew that I am far from neglecting it, I have sent it to a friend of yours, who differs not much from me about forbearance, and understands your way of reasoning far better than I can pretend to, and can lay before you his view in a far plainer and clearer writing style; and I have desired him to give you his view as plainly and openly as possible, and by all means without any thing of my fierceness. If you shall by your penetration discern any thing of fierceness in this scrap I have written, it must be very much smothered; for indeed it has been the whole time of writing strongly bridled by,

S I R,

Your, &c.

CATHOLIC

CATHOLIC CHARITY:

A View of the Scope of Rom. xiv.

Offered to the Consideration of Mr GEORGE WHITEFIELD, who preached the ANTINOMIAN CATHOLIC CHARITY from verse 17.

*Non ego ventosi venor suffragia vulgi,
Contentus paucis lectoribus.*

[First published in the year 1742.]

I. **T**HE apostle exhorts the Christian Gentiles to receive the believing Jew, zealous of the law of Moses, and so weak in the faith of the gospel, as their brother in Christ, to partake with them in all the privileges of the Christian brotherhood, notwithstanding his differing from them in judgment and practice as to the law given by Moses.

Him that is weak in the faith receive you, not to doubtful disputations.

He that is *weak in the faith* here, is a Jew, believing in Christ risen from the dead, for justification; and therefore subject to him as the Lord of his conscience, studying to observe all his commands. So he is a believer. But this is *lacking* in his *faith*: he knows not, that the death of Christ abolished the law given by Moses, and is not persuaded of the grounds of that liberty from it which the believing Gentiles enjoyed: and therefore he is ready to judge them, using that liberty, as not regarding the authority of the Lord, who gave that law, and who, being made of a woman, and made under it, became obedient to it to the death.

And, because faith in the blood of the Son of God shews itself in obedience to him, the *weakness* of the *faith* of this believing Jew appears in his readiness to be imposed on by his more knowing brethren, and to be tempted by them to practise according to their faith, and not his own, and so to fall from his subjection and obedience to the Lord of his conscience. It is true, that his being *grieved* *, when this happens in any instance, shews something of faith;

* Ver. 10.

but his readiness to stumble and fall in this manner, manifests the weakness of it: for as far as the conscience is purged by faith in the blood of Christ, so far it is subjected to his authority, and bound by his law; so that the *putting away of this good conscience, is making shipwreck of faith*, 1 Tim. i. 19.

The believing Gentiles are exhorted to receive this weak believer, *not to the doubts of disputations*.

It was clear enough beyond reasonable doubt, that the Lord had declared the Gentile converts free from the law of Moses; but it remained yet a matter of doubt and dispute, whether the Jews were as free from that law as the Gentiles? Some of the most knowing Jews, strong in the faith, as Paul, and the believing Gentiles, might draw the liberty of the Jews also, as an inference from the death and resurrection of Christ, *the end of the law for righteousness to every believer*, and the Gentiles might infer it from their own liberty; but as the Lord had, in the most solemn manner, laid the law of Moses upon the Jews, it required an express revelation to loose their consciences from the obligation of it: for though liberty was purchased for the Gentiles by Christ's death, they were not admitted to the enjoyment of it without the express revelation which we see written in the 10th and 15th chapters of the Acts; and certainly the liberty of the Jews from the law wherewith the Lord had bound their consciences, did no less require plain and clear revelation. They must have a very slight notion of the authority of a divine revelation, who imagine that it can be set aside by any reasoning, without another revelation from God. Now, we do not see him making any such revelation to the Jews in the New Testament till the writing of the epistle to the Hebrews, when the destruction of the temple was *approaching* *. And till that revelation came, the apostles, who were Jews, even Paul himself, the most zealous contender for the liberty of the Gentiles, (however much he might be persuaded, that there was liberty for the Jews also in Christ's death abolishing the law), did in fact observe the law, and countenanced the believing Jews in observing it †, till the Lord should *reveal* their liberty to them, as he foretells that he would, Phil. iii. 15. and this even while he would give no

* Heb. x. 25. and xiii. 10. 13. 14.

† Acts xvi. 1. 3. and xviii. 18. and xxi. 20.—26.

countenance to any thing like imposing that law on the Gentiles, and discharged them to observe it*.

The believing Gentiles, knowing the grounds of the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, were ready to press these grounds, in disputing, upon the believing Jews; who, though they believed on Christ for righteousness, could not see that he had freed them from the law of Moses; and therefore durst not do the things forbid there, for fear of displeasing the Lord, who gave them that law, and had never yet declared them free from it. The Gentiles might perceive much of their ignorance and weakness in the faith, as they disputed with them on a point in which these Jews could not find their consciences loosed by any reasoning without express revelation: and in this case the Gentiles were ready to despise them, and slight the strait of their conscience, (though really bound by divine authority), because they did not appear to them to be influenced by the principles of the gospel, upon which they argued with them. Therefore the apostle, first of all, forbids them to trouble these weak believers with those disputations.

II. Then he condescends on the things that ordinarily occasioned disputations among believing Jews who were weak in the faith, and believers of the Gentiles, living together.

One believeth he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

They had frequent opportunities of friendly eating together, as in their *feasts of charity* †; and the Jews could not eat of the meats pronounced unclean to them, and forbid in their law, which the Gentiles used freely: so they were obliged, while the Gentiles were eating those meats, to put up with herbs, or any such meats easily come by, about which they had no suspicion. Compare Dan. i. 8. 12. The fear of sinning, that puts men upon their guard against all appearance of evil, can never be condemned; but if they were so scrupulous as to confine themselves to herbs, this must be attributed to their weakness: for this was to carry the matter beyond the law.

As to the Gentile, who believed he might eat all things, it must be observed, that *blood* was none of those things about

* Gal. ii. 3. 4. 5. and v. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 18.

† 2 Pet. ii. 13. and Jude ver. 12.

eating of which the Christian Jews and Gentiles differed: for the believing Gentile knew, that the *decrees* * which made him free from the law of Moses, and acknowledged him a member of Christ's church without the observation of that law, did at the same time expressly † make it *necessary* for him to abstain from blood, as well as from idolthytes ‡ and fornication. Nor was blood forbid in the law as an unclean thing; for *almost all things are by the law purged with blood*, Heb. ix. 22.; but this was the reason of the prohibition of eating blood in the law, Lev. xvii. 11. *For the blood, it maketh atonement for the soul.* And this reason holds as true in the New Testament; yea, it is verified only there. And, from the time when God granted *every moving thing that liveth* to be meat for men, even as the green herb, long before the law of Moses distinguished clean and unclean meats to Israel, it was always unlawful to eat the flesh with the life thereof, the blood thereof, Gen. ix. 3. 4.; and it still remains so, by the New Testament, that sets aside that distinguishing law.

One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day.

The believing Jew distinguished the days that were set apart to him in the law of Moses, and kept the seventh day appointed in that law as the sabbath; but the believing Gentile made no distinction betwixt these days and any other days; the holy days of that law were no more holy in his esteem than every day.

It is true, he observed the *Lord's day*, the first day of the week, whereon the Lord *ceased from his works*, and *entered into his rest*, which is *another day* than the seventh, and was limited in the Old-testament prophecy, and is left in the New Testament as the *sabbatism* to the people of God, Heb. iv. 3.—10. But he did not keep this New-testament sabbath-day from any regard to the authority of the law of Moses: for it was not appointed there. And what the apostle says here of the days about which the Jews and Gentiles differed, can never be extended to the Lord's day; because there was no difference betwixt them about that day. They who would apply what is here said of days, to the Lord's day, cannot reasonably differ from those

* Acts xvi. 4.

† Acts xv. 28. 29. and xxi. 25.

‡ Rev. ii. 14. 15.

who have applied what is said of *meat and drink*, ver. 17. to the Lord's supper.

But though the Christian Jews and Gentiles came together on the first day of the week to break bread, yet their daily conversation could not but be much interrupted by their different practice as to the holy days of Moses; and this occasioned disputations, which issued in their despising and judging one another, or else in making the weak believer doubt, and act against his conscience in submission to his more knowing brethren.

III. The apostle supposes, that all these believers, both Jews and Gentiles, weak and strong, were, in their different practices as to these meats and days, shewing regard to the Lord's authority in his word binding their consciences; and that, as they differed in their practice, each of them was acting as he should be answerable to him the great Judge.

“ He that regardeth the day, regardeth unto the Lord;
 “ and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth
 “ not regard. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord; for
 “ he giveth God thanks: and he that eateth not, to the
 “ Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none
 “ of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. For
 “ whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether
 “ we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live there-
 “ fore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ
 “ both died, and rose again and revived, that he might
 “ be Lord both of the dead and living.—We shall all
 “ stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.—Every
 “ one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

This could not be said, if there was no revelation of the Lord's mind and will obliging each of their consciences, or if their practices, as to these meats and days were not regulated nor influenced by any word or law of his. The apostle, therefore, is not supposing that any of them was acting according to a persuasion of his own without respect to revelation; but the persuasion he speaks of, respects the law of the Lord to them, which directed and obliged their consciences. And so, when he says, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, he must be understood as saying, Let every one of you be fully assured, that the law of that same Lord, who ye believe died and rose again, obliges or allows him to act as he does, in keeping or not keeping the law of Moses as to unclean meats and holy days; and let
 none

none of you be any way obliged by another to practise according to the persuasion of his brother's mind, and not his own. And when he says, *To him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*, he is not speaking of mens fancies aside from the law of God: for the Jews esteemed the meats forbidden in their law to be unclean, because the Lord had expressly pronounced them unclean to them.

And it is manifest, from ver. 22. 23. that the apostle is speaking of the persuasion of *faith*, which has always a respect to revelation, and depends wholly upon it.

If either of the differing parties acted according to any persuasion of their own aside from the divine law, then they were living to themselves, regarding or not regarding the day to themselves, and eating or not eating to themselves, and not unto the Lord: for, when we pretend to do any thing to the glory of God, if that thing be not done in *thankful* subjection to his word, or, if it be grievous to us to be limited by his revealed will in the doing of it, we are certainly doing it to ourselves, and our pretence of serving and glorifying the Lord Jesus is vain.

If we be not subject to the authority of the Lord Christ, in living and dying, but are directed by some other rule than his word, then we are not his *servants*, we are not living and dying to him, and so are not his; and, whatever we may pretend, we are none of them that believe in his death and resurrection for justification; because this is the very end of his dying and rising, (about which the faith of all Christians is especially exercised), that he might be Lord both of the dead and living: and therefore all who believe in him, must be subject to him as their Sovereign Lord, Lawgiver, and Judge; and this is the great evidence of their being his. Without this, faith cannot appear, nor can any be received to the Christian communion, and privileges of the brotherhood, without some appearance of this: for when Paul bids the believing Gentiles receive the Jew weak in the faith, and not using the Christian liberty, but observing the law of Moses, he sets this weak believer before them as subject to the Lord in that very thing: and therefore it is very far from his design, to oblige Christians to receive those as weak brethren, who, professing to believe in Christ, are subject to the doctrines and commandments of men, and refuse subjection to any of the commandments of the Lord Jesus.

They who pretend a commission from Jesus Christ to
preach

preach his gospel after the apostles, are obliged by that pretence, to teach the disciples to observe all things whatsoever he commanded his apostles *, which things they taught the first Christians to observe : and if they acknowledge any as disciples who will not be taught to observe all these things, they are then plainly acting contrary to his instructions to his apostles, and to their own pretended commission.

IV. The apostle forbids the Jew to judge the Gentile, for not shewing the regard that he thought was due to the law of Moses, as if he were disregarding the Lord's authority : because, even in not keeping that law, he was serving the Lord who had received him into his church without it, and had declared his will, that *the Gentiles which believe should observe no such thing*, Acts xxi. 25. with chap. xv. 28. And, on the other hand, he forbids the Gentile to despise the Jew for keeping that law after Christ had abolished it by his death ; because, even by his strict observance of it, he shewed his regard to the Lord's authority, who gave him that law, and had not yet, by express revelation, loosed his conscience from it.

“ Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not ;
 “ and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth : for God hath received him. Who art thou that
 “ judgest another man's servant ? to his own master he
 “ standeth or falleth : Yea he shall be holden up : for
 “ God is able to make him stand. — But why dost thou
 “ judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy
 “ brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat
 “ of Christ.”

From this it appears most plainly, that he supposes both of them serving God and acting with a view to the judgment of Christ, the only Lord of their consciences, to whom they were accountable for their different practice.

But, as the Jew is forbid to judge the Gentile, using the liberty which the Lord had given him, and therefore serving him in the use of it ; so, if the Gentile, upon his being judged by the Jew, should no more practise according to his own judgment and conscience, but according to the judgment of his weak brother ; he would, in that case, be no more serving God, but his brother, nor regarding the judgment of Christ as his Lord, but his brother's judgment.

* Math. xxvii. 18. 19. 20.

And so we find this same apostle forbidding the Christian Gentiles to regard any man's judgment against them, or to submit to it, as to those very *meats* and *days* whereof he speaks in this place, when he says, Col. ii. 16. 17. "Let
 " no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in
 " respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the
 " sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come; but
 " the body is of Christ."

And, on the other hand, if the Jew, by means of his brethren the Gentiles their setting him at nought, seeking to impose their liberty on him, or using that liberty in any such way as served to tempt him to use it with them, should be prevailed on to submit to them, and go along with them in their practice for peace sake, or to gain their esteem, or for fear of being rejected by them; he would then not be the servant of God or the subject of Jesus Christ, but the servant and subject of his brethren or of the church: and in this case, both he and the church would be sinning against Christ; as we shall see from the following part of the apostle's discourse. For,

V. He speaks of this way of following our brethren against our own faith, or of complying with their practice while we doubt if it be agreeable to the Lord, as a very bad thing, and a far greater evil than is commonly apprehended. He calls it *stumbling* and *falling*, and connects it with *condemnation* and *destruction*. And therefore he most earnestly exhorts the Gentiles to take the greatest care lest they should so contend for their liberty, or even so use it, as to tempt the Jew to use it with them doubtfully, to the wounding of his weak conscience, and grieving him. And as every one should practise according to his own faith before God, he forbids any one of them to attempt the imposing of his faith upon another.

" Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but
 " judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or
 " an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. I know, and am
 " persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing un-
 " clean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to
 " be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be
 " grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charita-
 " bly. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ
 " died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the
 " kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteou-
 " ness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he
 " that

“ that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God,
 “ and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after
 “ the things which make for peace, and things wherewith
 “ one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work
 “ of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for
 “ that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither
 “ to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby
 “ thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.
 “ Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy
 “ is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which
 “ he alloweth. And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat,
 “ because not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is
 “ sin,” &c. to ver. 8. of chap. xv.

It must be the greatest grief to a believer in Christ, to find himself fallen from the subjection and obedience to him that is inseparable from faith in him. And if the Gentile, by setting his meats before the Jew, calling him to use the gospel-liberty, disputing with him, shewing contempt of his weakness, or even threatening him with rejection, or any other way, should prevail on him to doubt, and to eat with him; then it behoved the conscience of this weak believer, being still bound by the law of Moses, and not loosed from this obligation by the word of the Lord, to condemn him as fallen from his obedience to the Lord. This could not but grieve him exceedingly, and at the same time provoke him to *speak evil* of the Gentile liberty, which, though *good* in itself, was exposed to be *evil spoken of*, by the abuse of it in imposing it on him whom the Lord had not declared free to use it, and by the sad condition wherein he found himself after using it: for however good that liberty might be to the Gentile, and however *pure* these meats might be in themselves and to the Gentile, he found to his sad experience, that taking the liberty to eat them was bad to him; and that not only his *flesh*, but what is much more, his *conscience*, was *defiled* by eating them: for he found himself fallen from *righteousness*, or from his conformity to the Lord, and from his obedience to his law; he found his true *peace* with the brethren, as a fellow-subject of the Lord Jesus, broken, by his falling from his subjection to him for the sake of peace; and he found himself deprived of that *joy in the Holy Ghost* that attends upon a good conscience, and the obedience of faith.

The apostle shews to them that are *strong*, how uncharitable it would be in them, and how great a transgression of

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of the holy commandment of brotherly love, to be the instruments of all this evil to their *weak* brother, through their not *bearing his infirmities*, but seeking to *please themselves*, by going about to impose their faith upon him: for this is to pull down and *destroy* a brother, instead of *edifying* or building him up in his faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus; and this is to break the bond of peace with a fellow-subject of that Lord, in place of *following after the things that make for peace* with him, as charity requires.

Nor could the Gentile, by this, promote the good cause of his liberty, as he might suppose; but rather did it great hurt, by giving so great occasion for its being *evil spoken of*. Yea, the apostle tells him, it were much better not to use his liberty with the weak, than that so much mischief to them should be the consequence of his using it: for though he ought not to submit to the weak judging him; yet where the use of his liberty caused the fall of his weak brother, there it is *evil*; and it must be *good*, in that case, to forbear it.

And if the Gentile pleaded, it was a *good* thing wherein he wanted his weak brother to follow him, and that there was really no *uncleanness* in the meats wherein he would have him to eat with him; he did not consider that it was *evil* to his brother, and that those meats were *unclean to him* whose conscience found itself still bound by a divine law to forbear them as unclean.

And whereas the Gentile might pretend zeal for the kingdom of God, its unity and order, in his leading the Jew after him, and bringing him into subjection to himself in the use of these meats; the apostle lets him know, that the *kingdom of God* does not consist in uniform subjection of the weak to the strong *in meat and drink*, but in *righteousness**, or conformity to the word of the Lord and obedience to his commandments, and in *peace* with one another as fellow-subjects to him who is the Lord our righteousness, and in that *joy in the Holy Ghost*, that is connected with righteousness and peace: for it is promised to them that keep his commandments, and

* *Righteousness*. The following words, *He that in these things serveth Christ*, plainly shew, that this is not the imputed righteousness which is of God by faith, but our conformity to it in keeping Christ's commandments, even as he kept his Father's commandments, John xv. 10. See 1 John iii. 7. Heb. v. 8. 9.

particularly his new commandment of brotherly love, John xiv.

Upon the whole, the apostle commands the believing Gentile to *have his faith to himself*, to guide his own practice before God; and this in opposition to his studying to impose it on his brother, and so tempting him to sin, by following him without a firm persuasion that his doing so is lawful by the Lord's word, and thereby exposing him to condemnation.

What an argument is here against *church-authority*, and the *Antichristian uniformity*! The *Christian uniformity* must lie in the joint profession of believing on Christ through the word of his apostles *, and of observing all things whatsoever he commanded his apostles to teach the disciples to observe, even as we see them written in the New-testament scriptures, to which no new revelation can now be added.

How desirable a thing is the uniformity that is pointed out to us in these texts: Rom. xv. 6. — *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God*; 1 Cor. i. 10. — *That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment*? But, through the subtilty of Satan, this was used as a specious pretext to seduce Christians, and draw them away from the New Testament as the bond of peace and only rule of Christian unity, into union with the world, in subjection to church-authority in *creeds* and *canons*, really against Christ, though under colour of uniform subjection to him. This Antichristian uniformity, chargeable with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, is now in a great measure broke, to the no small grief of all its lovers and friends. Every party of these would have their own uniformity established over all the Christian world, and they shew themselves inclined to persecute all that would oppose it. But this cannot now take place as it has done in the world. God has confounded the *lip* of the builders of Babel, so as they shall never more agree in a catholic confession and form of religion. Satan therefore must go to work another way.

How agreeable is *catholic charity* to every Christian heart, when we take it to signify *love to all the saints*! How glorious a thing is that *forbearance* which the apostle recommends to the believing Jews and Gentiles! It can never be

* John xvii. 20. 21.

enough commended. But let us take care to keep our eye on the New Testament as the bond of peace and only rule of Christian charity, when we hear men lanching out in the praises of catholic charity and forbearance: for if we consider the various purposes for which this is now so earnestly recommended to us, we shall find reason to suspect a snake in this grass also.

The Christian Deist calls for catholic charity as due to *moral virtue*, more honourable to our nature, and more beneficial to human society, than the obedience of faith; pleads for our pity to the poor Heathen, that, as far as our compassion is moved, we may resent the severity of the gospel; and sets up Socrates to us as an overcomer of the world by reason and philosophy, without faith, that the more we value him, we may think the less of revelation. And as far as we admit this charity, we must become moderate, or cool and indifferent about the faith once delivered to the saints, yea and be haters of those who are most zealous of the faith of the Son of God, as the only principle of unfeigned goodness and true virtue in the world.

Arians, Arminians, and such like, plead for catholic charity on the footing of sincere obedience to the gospel, the best system of moral virtue, with the best motives and helps to the practice of it; and this in a sort of opposition to the person, the imputed righteousness, and exceeding abundant grace of the Son of God. When we hearken to these men, and get in to the spirit of their charity, we shall despise and hate those who are zealous for *faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ* *, and for the peculiar grace of his Spirit.

And even Antinomians now cry up catholic charity on the score of grace, and the imputed righteousness, and of illumination in the knowledge of that, by which (for without it no man can be a Christian) they persuade themselves that they are Christians, without the observation of all things whatsoever Christ commanded the apostles to teach his disciples to observe. They make as little account of these institutions and commands of Christ, as they do of the law of Moses about meat and drink, and holy-days; yea they place all differences, among the illuminated, about the words and laws of the Lord Jesus, to the same account with all the idle differences about the doctrines and com-

* 2 Peter i. 1.

mandments of men. If we get into the spirit of this charity and forbearance, we shall not be toiled with the work and labour of love; we need only love, in word and in tongue, the professors of faith without works: but then, if any adhere rigidly to the observation of all things whatsoever Christ commanded his apostles to teach the disciples to observe, these must be hateful to us as enemies to this blessed catholic charity.

It is not now to be expected, that the Christian nations, and their kings and armies, will ever be gathered together again in a catholic uniformity. Yet who knows but the noise and cry for extensive charity may at last *gather them** in some way of catholic charity and forbearance? But, in such an union, the church of Christ must still be confounded with the world, and it must take place at the expense of no small part of the testimony of Jesus, and not a few of the commandments of God; and the forbearance would be full as kind to them who should persevere in their vain conversation, received by tradition from their fathers, as to those who should be tenacious of the traditions of the apostles in the New Testament. And so this union of the Christian world, would be against *the remnant of the woman's seed keeping the commandments of God, and holding the testimony of Jesus Christ*†. It behoved these to be hateful to the charitable, forbearing Christian world, as enemies to the catholic charity; even as they were before hated and persecuted as enemies to the catholic uniformity.

* Rev. xvi. 13. 14.

† Rev. xii. 16. 17.

**The UNLAWFULNESS of BLOOD-EATING,
shewed from a View of the Tenure by
which the Christian Gentiles from the Be-
ginning held their Liberty in CHRIST from
the Yoke of the Law of Moses.**

[First published in the year 1743.]

The P R E F A C E.

HOW rare is it to find a man, even in the Christian world, that will give himself the trouble to go to the bottom of a question about any doctrine or precept of revelation, when the question is only, What says God?

We love to reason on abstract notions of the Deity, and on points that can never be fixed by reasoning, as *liberty and necessity*, the *nature, first rule, and principle of moral virtue*, the being and nature of material and immaterial substances, and *the immateriality and immortality of the soul*. And the most ignorant of us are the most dogmatic on all these points; presuming that fine abstract reasoning has decided and determined all: while we do not perceive, that our various persuasions as to these things are influenced the same way as we see the most stupid of mankind persuaded, to whom we sometimes appeal in these questions; as, when we have done our best, on the *simplicity of thought*, and the as great *simplicity of motion*, in the question about the immateriality of the soul, we at last appeal to common inward sense and feeling for a principle of thought distinct from matter.

We have a mighty liking to pictures, and are fond to see nature imitated, but especially to behold human nature painted to the advantage. We search history to behold with admiration the heroes in warlike, virtue, or philosophic virtue, or in political and governing virtue: for there we see what human nature is capable of. And when the dark side of it cannot but appear to us in many horrible instances in fair history, that serves but as a shade in the picture to make the warlike, the philosophic,
or

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or political hero rise before us in all his glory, and so affect us with a sense of the dignity of our nature, as to set us on to shew it in ourselves. And how much have we been exercised in pointing out to one another the beautiful strokes of these painters, the *poets* and *orators*? We labour to understand all the languages wherein such philosophy, history, oratory, and poetry is preserved to us, and think our labour well bestowed in translating all those fine things in the best manner into our own language. And some of us break our heads all our days on the porch to learning, mere language.

In all this every one of us, as severally exercised, imagines that he answers the great end of the human make: for who denies that man is made for knowledge and reasoning, and that this is the grand thing in man? And as we are thus employed, we conceive ourselves to be rising high above the common ignorant herd of mankind, to see beauties and feel delights far beyond their reach, or to be diving into mighty depths for treasures hid there from the poor ignorant vulgar. Yea and by this we conceive ourselves fitted to conduct the rest of mankind in the business they have to do with God.

But if our honour in life, our gain and pleasure, has no connection with the learned world, and lies rather in the common course of the busy world; a question or point of mighty moment among the learned, will be the merest trifle in the world to us. Shall I trouble my head about things that will never increase my stock, promote the credit and honour of my family, nor give me a sweeter relish of life? Let the learned break their heads about these matters; I leave them to their better judgments, to mind things of greater importance, substantial things that a man can get between his finger and his thumb. Connect religion itself with these things, (for some religion we must have), and I will be as religious as you please.

But says one, who lunched as far any other into the world of wisdom and knowledge, the world of pleasure, politeness, and grandeur, and even the trading world, and from the greatest experience of it all declares it to be all vanity: *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man.* This is the proper use of him, this is all that he serves for.

If man was made to know and to love God, this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; to which
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we are told, that the course of the wise, the grand, and busy world is so opposite, that we must not be conformed to it, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, if we would prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.

The learned have applied their learning to the book of God; and they are telling the rest of mankind what is his will by their skill in language, by their knowledge of the philosophy about moral virtue, and by abstract reasoning; and after all we hear rather from them what in their reason he ought to say, than what he indeed says. Much labour is bestowed upon the question, What God should in reason, and according to the fitness of things, say to us? how he should deal with us? where and how far it is proper for him to interpose his authority? and where he should lay the greatest stress in his dealings with us? But, aside from this, we are not much troubled about the fact: What is indeed his mind and will? what says he? and what would he have us to do? It appears in the common course of doctrine and religious practice, that this plain question is far from being the only one, as it ought to be; or else it is too plain, that we rarely seek to know in good earnest in order to do.

As to the book of God in our hands; if we receive it as his from tradition and the authority of the church, we never doubt to take the meaning of it from the same hand; and so we go upon the question, What says our church? and what said the fathers? But if we receive it because to us it appears rational in the main scope of it, and agreeable to our principles of reason, then our reason, that led us to it, must give us the sense and meaning of it; and so, whatever appears agreeable to our reason, must be the revealed will of God. And if there be any thing in that book shocking to our reason, or any thing that appears trifling or of no great importance, we are sure God the author of our reason (and we have it right) cannot lay much stress upon that. So we inquire, What says our reason? and then the Bible gives us a fine system of moral virtue. And next we inquire, What is it in this book that appears of greatest importance, particularly as to what it requires of us? and there we begin to cut and carve upon it, by distinguishing betwixt moral and positive precepts, to lay the greatest stress on the moral, while we neglect or observe the positive as we see cause; though the book plainly makes
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the whole misery of mortal man the consequence of his disobedience to a positive precept, and makes our salvation to depend on the command, to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Few believe the Bible upon the evidence that God himself gives in that book, that has been kept indeed by the church, but is not committed to any men to give it its gloss; for it interprets itself: and there are as few who take it as its own interpreter, having no other question but, What says it? and no other guard against a false gloss but; *It is written again.* Say that this itself is good reason. If it be so, then I would be glad to see it more hearkened to and followed; but I would call it, hearing God speaking to us in the scriptures.

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THE revelation and divine grant of liberty to all the Gentiles from the yoke of the law given by Moses, is in those decrees which were ordained, Acts xv. See from ver. 22. to 30.

This happened in consequence of God's *opening the door of faith* to the idolatrous Gentiles by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas; as may be easily seen by any attentive reader of Acts xiii. 2. 3. & 44. to 49. xiv. 15. 21. 22. 23. & 27. & xv 1. 2.

These decrees were delivered by Paul the apostle of the Gentiles, to churches of those Gentiles who had been turned to God from idols; as we see from Acts xvi. 1. 4. compared with chap. xiv.

And, long after this, when Paul had laboured much more among the idolatrous Gentiles, James and the elders in Jerusalem repeat this to him, as a standing law with respect to the Gentiles which then believed, after he had "declared" to them "particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." They say to him, "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." See Acts xxi. 18. 19. 20. 21. & 25.

This was decreed in the church at Jerusalem, from whence,

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whence, according to the prophecies, *the law and the word of the Lord* was to go forth to the Gentiles, to put an end to the enmity and strife betwixt them and the Jews, *Is. ii. 3. 4.* And it is the answer of a question that came from Antioch, moved there by certain men which went out from the apostles at Jerusalem, pretending their authority for what they said, *Acts xv. 1. 2. 23. 24.* This question was touching the necessity of bringing the believing Gentiles under the obligation of the law of Moses by circumcision, in order to their being held and acknowledged as partakers with the believing Jews in the salvation that is by Christ.

The agreement of the *whole church* in Jerusalem with the apostles and elders, in their answer to this question, was influenced, first, by what Peter said of the testimony that God had given to the uncircumcised profelytes of the gate, who received the gospel at first from his mouth, putting no difference between them and the circumcised, *Acts xv. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 14.* with chap. x. and xi. 17. 18.; and then, by what Paul and Barnabas narrated concerning the uncircumcised who had been turned to God from idols by their ministry, among whom they had been labouring at the hazard of their lives, *Acts xv. 12. 26.* with chap. xiii. and xiv.; and likewise, by the application that James made of the prophecy of Amos to all the Gentiles that had *turned to God*, without any thing like a foundation for an exception of those turned from idols, *Acts xv. from ver. 15. to 20.* Or, if we would go about to make any such exception, and restrain the decrees concerning the liberty of the Gentiles to the profelytes of the gate, and apply the answer of the question that came from Antioch to these only, and not at all to the Gentiles turned from idols, as some do, for no other reason but because the church in Antioch at first consisted of such; we should find ourselves, in that case, plainly contradicted by James himself, who applies this answer of the question that came from Antioch expressly to the idolatrous Gentiles converted by Paul, *Acts xxi. 19. 20. 25.*

The answer then of the question comes to this, That there is no obligation upon any Gentile convert to be circumcised, and so to keep the law of Moses; but that all the believing Gentiles are brethren in Christ to the believing Jews, and sharers with them in his salvation, to all intents and purposes, without circumcision, or keeping that law: and, at the same time, it is decreed by the same

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authority, and agreed to in the same manner, and in the answer to that same question, that these Gentiles are obliged to "these necessary things," viz. "to abstain from pollutions of idols," ver. 20. *i. e.* "from meats offered to idols," ver. 29. "and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication."

In this manner therefore did the Gentiles, from the beginning, hold the grant of freedom from the *burden* or obligation of the law; bearing the *burden* or obligation of these necessary things laid upon them in the charter by which they held their liberty.

I. They were bound to abstain from idolothytes, or meats offered to idols.

They were not to imagine, that this liberty from the law of Moses (by which every thing pertaining to idolatry was abomination) gave them any more indulgence as to partaking with idolaters even in the meats they had offered to their idols: for, as eating, knowingly and wittingly, of idolothytes, was the worship of idols or idolatry, (1 Cor. x. 7.), it was no less contrary to the true Christian purification than it was to the Jewish; the gospel being the clearest discovery of the true God against all idols and all idolatry, calling the Gentiles every where to repent of it under the pain of eternal judgment.

It is true, some of the Corinthians reasoned themselves into the eating of idolothytes, by inferences drawn from this principle, opposite to idols, and agreed to by the apostle, viz. *That an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.* But the apostle declares himself much against their practice inferred from it, and condemns the practice two ways. 1. He supposes their inferences to hold so as they could eat with clearness of conscience, as being firmly persuaded, that the *idolothyte is not any thing*, seeing *the idol is not any thing*; and that, after all that could be done in the way of offering the meat, it still remained the Lord's; because *the earth is his, and the fulness thereof.* But, even upon this supposition, that they did not forbear these meats for the sake of their own conscience, he shews them, that, not only in regard to the conscience of the Gentile idolater, who hardened himself in his idolatry against the gospel by their partaking with him in his idolothytes, and the conscience of the Jew, who was ready to stumble at Christ as an indulger of idolatry upon this practice of the most knowing Christians; but especially for the

the sake of their weak brother's conscience, who, though turned to the true God from idols, did not know, as they, that an idol was nothing : they ought by all means to abstain from such meats : because their brother, who had not their knowledge to boast of, and could not eat with so clear a conscience as they, might be tempted, by their example, to sin against his own conscience in eating those meats. See 1 Cor. viii. and x. from ver. 23. to the end.

2. But then he affirms, that the things the Gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to dæmons, who affected the worship from men that is due only to God, or to the divine Mediator, (pointing, as would seem, to Levit. xvii. 5. 6. 7.) ; and thereby he shews the unlawfulness of eating of these sacrifices, as being a partaking with dæmons, perfectly inconsistent with their partaking with the Lord, or having any part in his table, 1 Cor. x. 7. 14. 19. 20. 21. 22. He forbids the eating of idolothytes, as idolatry, in these words, " Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them ; " as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, " and rose up to play ; " and, " My dearly beloved, fly " from idolatry." He takes up the force of all they had to say for it, and of their evasion from the strength of his exhortation, in these words, " What say I then ? that the " idol is any thing, or that the idolothyte is any thing ? " And he answers it and sets it aside in these words : " But, " I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they " sacrifice to dæmons, and not to God : and I would not " that ye should have fellowship with dæmons. Ye cannot " drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of dæmons ; ye " cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table " of dæmons. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we " stronger than he ? " Thus he says, the sacrifices of the Gentiles went really to dæmons, so that they could not be partaked of without partaking with those who were not at all gods, as their worshippers supposed and called them, but in reality wicked rivals to the Lord, whom the partakers of his table provoked to jealousy by partaking in their sacrifices. And thus, in the plainest manner, he makes abstinence from idolothytes a term of Christian communion ; even as after this, in the epistles to the Asian churches, Rev. ii. the Lord declares his hatred of the doctrine that taught the lawfulness of eating idolothytes, and finds fault with the church in Pergamos for having such as taught it in their communion, ver. 14. 15. And by this

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we see how it was a *necessary thing* to abstain from idolothyes.

II. They were obliged to abstain from fornication.

This has an extensive meaning in the New Testament, as we may see from 1 Cor. vii. 1. 2. "It is good for a man
" not to touch a woman; but, for fornications, let every
" man have his own wife, and let every woman have her
" own husband." This is according to the primitive institution of marriage to Adam, to which our Lord refers when speaking of divorce. And whatever is beyond or beside this, in gratifying the natural appetite that the Creator gave to the male and female for generation, is fornication according to the New Testament; as we see plainly from this text that all other ways of satisfying that appetite, but by the benevolence due from the husband to his own wife, and from her to her own husband, are called *fornications*.

And it appears from 1 Cor. v. that *fornication* takes in incest, even in the highest degree of it. See ver. 1. The Gentiles knew very well the evil of uncovering the nakedness of any one whose *nakedness* is called our *own* in the law of Moses. They generally abhorred incest upon what we call the direct line; and so the apostle says, *that one should have his father's wife, is such fornication as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles*: but they did not so well know the evil of incest upon all the other degrees forbid in the law of Moses, nor did they stand so much upon them. And now when God declared that they were not obliged by the law of Moses, they were not to think that this gave them any more liberty than Israel had, as to the degrees of nearness of kin, or any more indulgence to such abominations as for which God said he cut off the Canaanites before his people, and would likewise cut off them, and the strangers sojourning among them, if they should be guilty of them, Lev. xviii.

When fornication is taken so largely as to include incest as one sort of it, it must also comprehend in its meaning every sort, as is before said. And the apostle plainly excludes fornicators without distinction from the Christian communion, forbidding Christians (1 Cor. v. 9. 10. 11.)
" to company with fornicators; yet not altogether with
" the fornicators of this world, or, &c. for then must ye
" needs go out of the world: but—if any man that is
" called a brother be a fornicator, or, &c. with such an
" one no not to eat." And the Lord says to the angel of
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the church in Pergamos, Rev. ii. 14. 15. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou HAST THERE them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication; so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." By this again we see how it was a *necessary thing* to abstain from fornication. But there is some ground for a question, If the sense that the Christian world has of this *necessity* be influenced from this authority? For,

III. They were the same way obliged to abstain from suffocated and blood, *απο του πνικτου και του αιματος*; that is, from blood, either mixed with the flesh, (as in creatures smothered), or separated from it. Thus the ancient Christians understood it, as Tertullian informs us in his *Apology*, chap. 9. *Erubescat error vester Christianis, qui ne animalium quidem sanguinem in epulis esculentis habemus, qui propterea quoque suffocatis et morticinis abstinemus, ne quo sanguine contaminemur vel intra viscera sepulto.* And so it is the same thing that was said to Noah in the grant of flesh for food, Gen. ix. 3. 4. *But flesh in its life, [or soul] its blood, shall you not eat.*

Nature did not teach man to kill and eat his fellow living creatures; his reason could not shew him any right he had to do it: and therefore the practice took its rise from revelation; even that same revelation which we have in the 9th chapter of Genesis, where the grant of animal food to man is thus expressed, "Every moving thing that liveth, shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh in its soul, its blood, you shall not eat." By the words immediately following, "And surely your blood of your souls will I require at the hand of every beast — and at the hand of man," it would seem, that this prohibition of blood-eating to men killing and eating flesh, is intended as a guard against the shedding of man's blood. But we must likewise observe here, that, in this grant of flesh for food, there is a plain reference to a former grant that God, the Lord of man's life, had made of food for him: for, when he says, *even as the green herb*, he plainly points to the first grant of meat to man, which we see Gen. i. 29. "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the
" which

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“ which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall
 “ be for meat.” In that first grant there was a limitation,
 that served to shew man’s dependence on his Creator and
 Lord, of whom he held his life and his food: for, Gen. ii.
 16. 17. “ The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of
 “ every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: but of
 “ the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt
 “ not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof,
 “ thou shalt surely die.” As man could not be independent
 of his Creator, in whom he lived, and moved, and had his
 being, and who made *meats for his belly, and his belly for
 meats*; it was most meet, that he should live, not by what
 he did eat alone, but by the word of his Lord God, that
 gave him food for his life, with a restriction and reserve
 which declared his dependence, and manifested that he
 held his life of him. So that his breaking through this li-
 mitation, in eating of the forbidden tree, was a plain re-
 nunciation of his dependence; by which his life was for-
 feited.

When man was condemned to death for his disobe-
 dience, and when God had intimated his design of redemp-
 tion through the death and shedding of the blood of that
 substitute, *the seed of the woman*, which was prefigured in
 the sacrifices, he gave to man another grant of food, for
 sustaining his mortal life more comfortably in the time of
 his long-suffering: and in this new grant of every living
 creature for meat, he reserves the *blood*, even as he did
 that *tree* in the former grant of herbs and fruits of trees.
 So that this precept about blood is of the same nature with
 that concerning the tree: only, whereas that declared
 man’s dependence on God as the author and Lord of his
 life, of which his disobedience deprived him, this declares
 the sinful mortal’s dependence on God as redeeming him
 from sin and death by atoning blood; and disobedience to
 this precept, imports disregard to that blood, as being in
 effect a renunciation of dependence on the Lord God, the
 sovereign author of redemption by blood.

For that this prohibition of blood-eating respected the
 atonement, is most manifest from the repetition of it to
 Israel by Moses, Lev. xvii. where the Lord gives charge
 about offering the peace-offerings (whereof Israel did eat
 with him) at his altar, in opposition to sacrificing their
 meats to devils, ver. 7. And he forbids them, or *strangers*
 sojourning among them, to *eat any manner of blood*, under
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the pain of *setting his face against the soul* that eateth it, *to cut him off*, ver. 10. And he gives this reason for it, ver. 11. 22. "For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; because, the blood, it shall atone for the soul." Thus he plainly tells them, that this precept, on which he laid so much, served to manifest their dependence on him the Sovereign God, giving them the blood upon the altar to atone for their souls; that, by observing it, they might shew their humble submission to his *sovereignty* in the *substitution*, and testify their reverence and awful regard to the atonement by blood. But the true atonement was not by the blood of beasts, which could not take away any real sin, and the respect due to it was on the account of the true atonement, prefigured by it, which is only in the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sins: and in this alone God's words concerning the atonement by blood are verified. Therefore, when the Gentiles are admitted to share in the salvation that is by this blood, without the typical sacrifices of the law, they are commanded to abstain from blood: for still the true reason of the prohibition remains: the everlasting atonement, whereby the Gentiles, as well as Jews, are eternally saved, is by blood that God hath given us upon the true altar. And so this prohibition of blood-eating was always, and still is of the greatest and highest importance.

It never had any relation to the distinction betwixt Israel according to the flesh and the Gentiles, which was established by the law of Moses. It had not the peculiarity of the Jewish people as the reason of it, like the prohibition of meats that God pronounced unclean to them. Nor was blood (by which almost all things by the law are purged) ever forbidden as unclean, like swines flesh, or like that which died of itself or was torn of beasts, whereof a stranger might eat, providing the blood was separated from it: for the stranger might not eat blood, Deut. xiv. 21. with Lev. xvii. 13. 14. 15. 16. As men do not use to buy and eat that which dies of itself unblooded, so any thing that died of itself or was torn (however blooded) was unclean to the people of Israel by the law of Moses.

The Gentiles therefore were not to think, that the declaration of their freedom from the obligation of that law, which

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which forbade the Jews the use of several meats as unclean, gave them any liberty from the obligation of the precept about blood, which was in the grant of flesh for meat to all mankind, and that with a view to the salvation of men from sin and death by blood. The apostles declared this precept to be still in force to the Gentiles, whom the law of Moses did not bind, and made the observation of it necessary in opposition to indifferent, even as abstinence from idolothytes and fornication, and of as great importance as any of these : for when they decreed against the necessity of circumcision and keeping Moses's law to the Gentiles, in order to their being held as members of the church that is saved by Christ's blood, they did then by the same authority decree the *necessity of these things* : for this was the necessity pointed to in the question to which the decrees are an answer ; and this is the necessity to be looked for in that answer, if we suppose, that, when the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem came together to consider of that question, they gave it an answer to the purpose.

It is odd, to say, that by *these necessary things* we are to understand, these indifferent things, made necessary at that time only by the present disposition of the believing Jews ; the same of which that church in Jerusalem then consisted, who it seems were well disposed to give up circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses to the believing Gentiles, but could by no means be prevailed with to give up the article of blood ! They who incline to talk at this rate must say further, That, by *these necessary things*, we must understand, partly such indifferent things, and partly things necessary in opposition to indifferent : for some of those things that are here declared necessary, are owned to be very far from indifferent, and affirmed to be binding on all Christians in all ages to the end of the world. Yet all this passes current among Christians as good sound interpretation of scripture.

But a necessity arising merely from the offence of the Jews, was full as great in the matter of *swines flesh* as in that of *blood* ; and it was as necessary for the Gentiles to keep the *rest of the seventh day*, to which the proselytes of the gate were as much obliged, by the fourth command, as they could be, by any precept, to abstinence from blood ; which yet, we see, is declared necessary in the same decrees that make these not necessary. *Moses's being read*
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in the synagogues every sabbath-day, can never appear to be a proper reason for the necessity of the one, and not of the other. But a very good reason it was, why the apostles, elders and brethren in Jerusalem, should write unto the Gentiles that had been troubled with a false gospel palmed on them as coming out from them; a very proper reason why the apostles should begin in this manner to write the New-testament revelation, that, as the law was read in the synagogues, so might the New Testament be also in the churches, and particularly this notable part of it, first committed to writing, concerning our liberty from the yoke of the law; which was accordingly delivered to the churches to keep, even as the law was kept in the synagogues.

And thus we may see, with what limitations we Gentiles from the beginning held our liberty in Jesus Christ from the yoke of the law of Moses; and particularly, that we held it with an express obligation laid upon us to abstain from blood, which was never allowed to men for meat, neither before the law of Moses, when the grant of animal food was as full to Noah, and as largely expressed, as it is any where in the New Testament, nor under that law, nor under the gospel, which is the clearest discovery of salvation by atoning blood: for, in the New Testament, which takes away the Mosaic limitations of the extensive grant of animal food to Noah, blood is once and again as expressly excepted as it was to Noah; and, unless some part of scripture-revelation can be produced that particularly removes this exception, it will be impossible to shew the lawfulness of blood-eating.

They who would say that this notable exception is removed by the general terms wherein the New-testament liberty to eat of all meats is expressed, may in the same manner assert, that the exception of blood is fully taken away by these words to Noah, *Every moving thing that liveth, shall be meat for you*; or that the exception of the tree of knowledge was set aside by these words to Adam, *Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat*. And if their argument be good, so was the devil's argument to Eve, when he commenced interpreter of revelation, and went about to make void the exception of that tree in this manner, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* It needs not, one would think, be told Christians, that he is not a fit pattern for them to imitate in the interpretation of their law. As for those infidels commonly

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called *Deists*, or their enthusiastic brethren the Quakers, they can have no room to speak on this question, till first, from their principles of reason and from the *fitness of things*, whereof they sustain themselves judges both for themselves and for *the only wise God*, or from their *light within*, their only standard of all scripture-interpretation, they be able to bring us their warrant for killing and eating the flesh of their fellow living creatures. And as for their beloved distinction of *moral* and *positive*, Christians should leave it with them, as unscriptural, and full of doubtful disputation, to make the best of it they can to help them out with their malignant sneer at positive institutions and precepts; that is, at the grand institution of atonement and salvation from sin and death by blood, and all the institutions and precepts relating to it and depending upon it; which must be of little or no consideration with us, in comparison with their moral wisdom, or *knowledge of good and evil*, if we hearken to their interpretation of scripture. But they have as little right to interpret scripture-revelation to us Christians, as their father the devil had to interpret the word of God to our first parents.

As for the arguments used commonly by Christians for the lawfulness of blood-eating, drawn from what is said in the New Testament, of things that were unclean (as blood could not be) to the Jews, and of idolothytes, that needed a question to be asked before they could be known to be such, and from the circumstances of the proselytes of the gate, and from the strangers being allowed by the law of Moses to eat that which dieth of itself; these arguments are fully obviated, by what is above said, to any attentive reader; and it is not worth while to write for any other.

Protestants who find many faults with the church of Rome, have not blamed her for making void the commandment of God concerning blood, and giving men a liberty to eat it; but, while they agree with her in this, against the Greek church and all the eastern Christians, some of them have complained much of her taking upon her by her authority to establish a distinction of meats in her days and seasons of fasting, binding mens consciences where God hath left them free; and so have applied to her that prophecy concerning the apostasy of the latter times, which we have 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. yet, from that same
very

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very passage, they can bring an argument to justify her in the eating of blood!

But the first Christians, (who were not the worst of the kind), knowing the import of the precept concerning blood, observed it most religiously. And though questions arose amongst them about idolothytes and fornication, yet we never read of any of them who had the confidence to say any thing in favour of eating blood, or to move any objection against the obligation of the precept about it, in any case. Yea so notour was the testimony they gave of their regard to the atoning blood of Christ in the strict observation of this precept, that, long after the time of the apostles, their persecutors distinguished them by it, even as the persecutors of the Jews had used to distinguish and prove them by swines flesh. Tertullian says, in his *Apology*, cap. 9. *Inter tentamenta Christianorum, botulos etiam cruore distentos admovetis, certissimum scilicet illicitum esse penes illos, per quod exorbitare eos vultis. Porro, quale est, ut quos sanguinem pecoris horrere confiditis, humano inhiare credatis? nisi forte suaviorem eum experti; quem quidem & ipsum proinde examinatore Christianorum adhiberi ut foculum, ut acerram, oportebat, &c.* And they appealed to this as a most notour fact, to shew their enemies the falsehood of the accusation against them, of killing and eating and drinking human flesh and blood: for this is also the answer Minutius Felix gives that accusation, *Nobis homicidium nec videre fas nec audire; tantumque ab humano sanguine cavemus, ut nec edulium pecorum in cibis sanguinem noverimus.* And the confession of Biblis, one of the martyrs of Vienna and Lyons, is remarkable to this purpose, and should not be slighted by those who shew much regard to the testimony of martyrs in other cases. Πως αὐτὰ παιδία φαγοῖεν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, οἱς μηδὲ ἀλογῶν ζῶων αἷμα φαγεῖν ἔχον;

And they who pay deference to the authority of synods and councils, should consider one of these ancient canons, commonly called apostolic, can. 63. Εἰ τις ἐπίσκοπος, ἢ πρεσβύτερος, ἢ διάκονος, ἢ ὅλος τοῦ καταλόγου τοῦ ἱερατικοῦ, φαγὴν κρεὶν ἐν αἱματι ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, ἢ θνητάτων, ἢ θνησιμίων, κἀβλαβεῖται. τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ νόμος ἀπέπιεν. εἰ δὲ λαϊκὸς ᾤη, ἀφοριζέσθαι. For here they have ancient church-authority for abstinence from blood and un-blooded flesh, as being a precept of the divine law, and as a term of Christian communion; and it will be hard for them to produce as good authority of the kind to the contrary.

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It was before observed, that there is a connection hinted in the precept to Noah betwixt the blood which is the soul of the beast and the blood of man's soul. Agreeably to this, we see the ancient Christians in their apologies, and the martyrs, pleading and arguing upon this connection : and therefore it could not appear so ridiculous to them, as it may do now in the Christian world, to forbear the blood of beasts out of respect to the atonement in the blood of Jesus Christ. As it is without controversy, that all Christians, for several ages after the apostles, forbore to eat blood or unblooded flesh ; it is evident, that they could not then believe the transubstantiation of the wine in the eucharist : but, in after ages, they, who came the length of believing that, and offering the cup of blood as a drink-offering to God, had no more reason for abstaining from blood, than the Gentiles had who offered drink-offerings of blood to their gods.

The

**The RULE of FORBEARANCE defended, in
a Letter, dated October 5. 1744.**

[Now first printed.]

M.

I Received yours, wherein it appears to me, you have not considered what is said by me, in the pamphlet on Catholic Charity, or in my reply to your first letter; so that I have little hope, that any thing I now write will have influence on you, and still the less when I consider that your rule is not revelation explaining itself, and applying to every man's conscience, but some inward light that men get in various degrees to understand it. You are bound by the authority of that inward light that leads you, and not by the authority of revelation, that cannot touch your conscience, nor lead you one jot further than the degree of your inward light goes. You cannot be convinced of sin, or condemned by revelation, in any thing that is beyond your degree of inward light. For it is not the word that Christ has spoken, but your degree of light, that must, it seems, judge you in the last day. And if any man offer to deal with your conscience, and find fault with you, by revelation, beyond your degree of the light within, he must in that case be a transgressor of the law of forbearance, that leads you off from attending to revelation, to attend to the various degrees of the inward light.

When you say that Christ's doctrine of forbearance never depended on different revelations, you own at the same time, that it was absolutely unlawful for the Gentiles to keep the law of Moses. And will you say that the same law made it lawful for the Jews, at the same time, to keep it? Or, if it was as absolutely unlawful for the Jews as for the Gentiles, was forbearance then due to the one, and not to the other? But if it was not absolutely unlawful to the Jews, was there then no difference in the revelation, as to them and the Gentiles to whom it was absolutely unlawful? Did the same revelation make it lawful and unlawful to the Jews at the same time? Even forbearance must be bound on us by revelation, or it cannot oblige us as a law of Christ;

Christ; and if so, then revelation must be the rule of that forbearance in every point: unless you would say, that God gave a revelation to men, and in that revelation a commandment not to walk according to that, but according to the various degrees of inward light, and according to their different degrees of weakness and strength.

The question betwixt you and me is about revelation as the rule of forbearance. And as I see you pleading revelation against itself in seven or eight heads distinguished in your letter, I shall follow you over these heads, to let you see, if you will, that revelation is the only rule of the Christian forbearance, and that your forbearance is not the Christian, because it goes not upon revelation.

1. As to your first head, you oblige me to tell you once more, the law of Moses was a divine revelation, binding the consciences of the Jews, and from this obligation nothing could loose them but another revelation taking it off by the same authority. The death of Christ could not in the least touch their consciences but by a revelation concerning it: for though the death of Christ intitles the Gentiles to the privileges of God's children and peculiar people, without coming under the law of Moses; yet this end of Christ's death was not reached on them, they were not taken into favour, till it pleased God to reveal this; nor could the apostle Peter call them to it with a good conscience, till it was revealed to him, though he had preached Christ by revelation to the Jews before. You may say upon this, as in the other case, this must land either in a deficiency of Christ's blood bringing the Gentiles near, or in God's debarring and keeping them afar off after his blood had brought them near. And the answer you may give yourself in this case, will serve you in the other. For neither could that end of Christ's death, the loosing of the consciences of the believing Jews from the obligation to keep the particular precepts of their law, be reached upon them by any means, but by an express revelation of that very end of it. This was necessary to secure the regard due from men to revelation, and to the authority of divine precepts, in opposition to the wickedness of men that would improve even the death of Christ to countenance or encourage them in neglecting the commands of God; and the Jews, who believed in Christ for righteousness, could not forsake these precepts of Moses in faith, without divine authority in a revelation calling them to forsake them: for faith depends on
revelation;

revelation; divine faith cannot be without the divine authority in a revelation.

If then the Jews forsook the precepts of Moses in faith, or believing God that they ought so to do, certainly this was upon God's saying so to them in some part of the New-testament revelation. But he cannot be found saying so to them in any part of that revelation before the epistle to the Hebrews; so that, till that part of the revelation came, the believing Jews kept the peculiar precepts of Moses, acknowledged the fleshly brotherhood, and remained citizens of Jerusalem and members of the commonwealth of Israel, and they could not till then forsake the precepts of Moses in faith. But after that part of the New-testament revelation was received, it cannot appear to me, from any subsequent part of the New-testament revelation, or from the earliest history of Christianity, that any Jew in the communion of the Christian churches, kept the law of Moses, or served the tabernacle.

As to your way of speaking about God's interposing his authority, and exacting obedience to the law after Christ fulfilled it, it seems to import, as if I had said, that the authority of God, in the precepts of Moses obliging the consciences of the Jews, was interposed after the death of Christ, and their believing he had fulfilled their law: but I am not conscious of my having once imagined, let be insinuated, in any writing of mine on the subject, that this authority of God was any where interposed, but in the Old-testament revelation, which obliged the consciences of the Jews, and bound them to keep those precepts, long before Christ's death, and before their believing that he fulfilled the law: and I only say, that this obligation remained and ought to remain on their consciences after they believed that Christ fulfilled the law, ay and until they also had ground to believe that God, who had once commanded them to keep those precepts, did now command them to forsake them.

2. On your second head you own, that the ends of Christ's death cannot be answered without revelation, which is in effect giving up your first. But then you assert a great falsehood against the necessity of a great part of the New-testament revelation, That when Christ was first preached, then all the ends of his death were revealed likewise. For this is to say, that there was no more revelation needful, after Peter's preaching to the Jews on the day

day of Pentecost, and that Peter himself, and all Christians after him, might have been left to understand the best way every one of them could, all the ends of Christ's death from that preaching, and so to forbear one another upon their different measures of weakness and strength of knowledge about it. For you lay this as a foundation of the distinction between weak and strong, upon which your forbearance goes; and by this you let me see very plainly how little your forbearance depends on revelation; yea, that it is not consistent with a complete revelation, but grudges the revealing of any thing beyond the first principles of Christ's doctrine.

Your forbearance will not let you see the necessity of any revelation but that of the first principles; but the author of revelation saw more needful, and answered that necessity, as in the case of Peter, who was not himself able to see from his own preaching on the day of Pentecost, that it was lawful for him to preach the gospel to the uncircumcised, and call them into the church, till God revealed this end of Christ's death to him expressly. And thus the Holy Ghost, according to Christ's promise to his apostles, led them, as it were, step by step, into the whole truth of the New-testament revelation: and they were Christ's ministers and witnesses, (as he said to Paul), both of the things which they had seen, and the things in the which he would yet appear unto them, ay and until the revelation was perfected; for until then they knew in part, and prophesied in part. Can any thing then be said more against fact and the nature of the thing than this is, that New-testament revelation was perfected at first, and that all that is said in the New-testament scripture, after that beginning, might have been as well inferred by us, from the first notice of the first principles of Christ's doctrine?

'The apostle,' Heb. v. 12. speaks of the first principles to them, who, in place of growing in the knowledge of the revelation already made, according to the time they had been under it, so as to be teachers of what they had been already taught, were not well fixed in these first principles, but ready to swerve from them, so that they needed to be taught them again. This made them very unfit to hear the things he had to say concerning Melchisedek, in order to shew the disannulling of the commandment concerning the Aaronical priesthood, by the oath to the Melchisedecian priest, and to manifest the change of the priesthood and

of the law, chap. vii. 11. 12. 17. 18. 19. They were not very fit to receive this oracle of God, while they were unskillful and wavering about the first principles of the divine oracles that they had been already taught. And he is so far from saying, that he is now to teach them again those things that they had been taught before, that he calls them to hold these things fixed as the first principles, in order to their understanding what he had now further to acquaint them of, which he would build on these first principles of the oracles of God, as upon the foundation. And so he tells them plainly, that he is not to lay again the foundation with them; but that, leaving the first principles of Christ's doctrine, as fixed points, he is to go on with them toward perfection in that doctrine, if God would permit them to go with him, as he says, chap. vi. 1. 2. 3. *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation; — and this will we do if God permit.* Will your teachers then, if they be apt to teach, say with you, that he tells the Hebrews, that, through their dulness, he was obliged in that epistle to teach them what, by that time, they might have been capable of teaching others? But I leave you and them to consider the passage, as you are able, and go on to your third head.

3. Though it was revealed that the Gentiles were members of Christ's church without the law, and therefore no more to be looked on or treated as unclean by the Christian Jews; yet it cannot appear that the Holy Ghost taught the Jews, when this was first revealed, that they ought not to observe the precepts of Moses, or that it was lawful for them to do the things that Moses forbade them to do. I know that it was contrary to the established custom of the Jewish nation, to keep company or come unto one of another nation as being unclean. And they extended this to publicans, though Jews, finding fault with our Lord for eating with them; nor had they any dealings with the Samaritans. And in this sense it was unlawful for a Jew to eat with the Gentiles. But I am straitened to find it unlawful, by any command or precept of Moses; far less can any doctrine or precept of Moses be found, that makes them unclean whom God sanctified, or common, after he had taken them from among men to be a people for his name. Peter's vision did not abolish the distinction of meats, but served to teach him quite another thing, viz.

Not to call any man common or unclean, i. e. not call a man of any nation whom God sanctified, common or unclean. You speak of serving the tabernacle, without thinking that all the peculiar precepts of Moses related to the tabernacle-service, and that it was served in the observance of them. And you talk of one verse (Heb. xiii. 10.) as if it were the only passage in that epistle that seemed to favour my purpose, or the only text that I can insist on there; which is a very great mistake. For, though that single verse indeed shews, with respect to the Hebrews, what another single text (Gal. v. 2.) shews, with respect to the Gentiles; yet I insist upon it, that, without the epistle to the Hebrews, no man can shew me, from any part of the New Testament, that the believing Jews are called to forsake the sabbath of the seventh day, the distinction of meats, divers purifications, the priesthood, sacrifices, and worship of the first covenant, and the earthly holy place and their citizenship in Jerusalem, with their part in the commonwealth of Israel; so instead of saying, my verse, you should have said, my whole epistle to the Hebrews.

4. For after all you say on your fourth head, I cannot find Paul, in any epistle but this, any where asserting the liberty of the Jews from the law, except in the matter of righteousness and justification, of which he speaks expressly in the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And when you speak of the liberty from the law to the Jews taught in Paul's epistles in opposition to the Judaizers, you should think of the bondage to which this liberty is opposed: for when you pretend to mention distinctly so many different respects, wherein you say the Gentiles were never under the law, and wherein the Jews were freed from it, as well as they; I am afraid you do not well understand any one of those names of the law, by which you pretend to point out the different senses and shapes wherein they were freed from it.

But I dare say, it would be worth your while, to consider wherein lay the bondage to the elements or rudiments of the world; because without that you can have no just notion of that liberty of which the apostle there speaks. Now, the law, as it was pleaded for by the Judaizers, was, in Peter's account, a yoke, which neither the believing Jews, nor their fathers, were able to bear. And Paul shews, that believers under it were as children under a school-master, teaching them the rudiments or elements of the knowledge

knowledge of Christ, or as a pupil under tutors and governors, differing nothing from a servant; and says they were kept under it, shut up unto the faith. Their bondage, pointed out in this manner, lay plainly in this, that they were under a law that said, "He that doth these things shall live in them;" and, "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" and this law not yet fulfilled, this demand not yet answered.

They were under a law representing to them continually the debt of sin not yet paid, nor discharged as fully paid; and though it pointed out a relief from this to come by the promised seed, the doer of the law and redeemer from the curse, yet it pointed to this relief as rudiments or first elements of knowledge put in the hands of children. It shewed the relief as a shadow darkly, so that, when they were pressed with the demand of the law, the relief appeared to them only as through a vail darkening it in the way of representing it to them. And when they were urged to look for that relief by the rigour of the law as a schoolmaster, they could see that spiritual thing only in worldly rudiments, and know it no otherwise than children know a science in the elements of it, that they are forced to learn.

This was their bondage: for if they had clearly beheld God reconciled, and the condition of life performed, as the word of faith, which the apostles preached, plainly shews, there was never any bondage in keeping the commandments of the law of God by Moses. And the commandments, as explained by Jesus Christ, are much harder to flesh and blood, than any precept of Moses, which the Jews observed in difference from the Gentiles. So that I cannot see the sense of that common way of speaking of the burdensome ceremonies of the law.

Now the Jews who believed in Christ for righteousness, according to the word of faith which the apostles preached, were freed from the bondage of the law, as it has been described, were delivered from the yoke of bondage, and received the adoption of children, by faith in Christ's having done the righteousness of the law, and enjoyed the freedom of heirs by the Spirit of adoption. And in this liberty the Gentiles partook with them, being delivered from the law as a wall of partition, whereby they were held far off.

For this was their condition before the faith came, that, by being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of circumcision, and the covenant at Sinai, they were without Christ, not having the hope of the promise, and without God in the world. Thus they were afar off, and could not come near, without circumcision, and coming within the bond of the covenant of Moses, subjecting themselves to that law of commandments contained in ordinances, without which they had no share with the peculiar people of God. But now it was revealed, that Christ's death had abolished the law, as a wall of partition, and broke it down; so that it could no longer debar them and keep them off, but that they had free access to God by Christ's blood without it; and that by faith in his blood, without the law, they were fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promise with the believing Jews, now delivered from the bondage of the law, and enjoying the freedom of heirs by faith in that same blood. These are all the respects wherein I can find the Jews and Gentiles delivered from the law, in those epistles of Paul that you mention.

But though the Jews were justified by the faith of Christ, without the deeds of the law, as well as the Gentiles, it cannot appear from these epistles, that the believing Jews were no more obliged to observe the precepts of Moses; while, at the same time, it is manifest, that the Gentiles were obliged not to observe them; because they could not become circumcised and keep the law, as the Judaifers called them to do, without seeking justification thereby, and so intangling themselves in the yoke of bondage by keeping the law as the condition of justification by Christ.

It was manifestly revealed, on the one hand, that the Gentiles needed not become circumcised, and come under the law, in order to be justified; and it was as manifestly revealed on the other, that the Jews were justified by the faith of Christ, without becoming uncircumcised, and forsaking the precepts of their law; for the same God justified the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Thus far went the revelation concerning the liberty of the Jews and Gentiles from the law; and accordingly the Jews remained in circumcision, and the Gentiles in uncircumcision, as Paul himself says, 1 Cor. vii. 18. 19. *Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised;*

uncircumcised: Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not become circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God. And revelation proceeded no further than this, till the epistle to the Hebrews, which shews them, that they were now no more keeping the commandments of God, in keeping of the law or the first covenant, now quite disannulled and made old to them.

5. But now it is time to proceed to your fifth head, which you may see to have been quite needless, if you but understand what I have been saying on the fourth. For you may see how I include the Jews, as Paul does, in that liberty, whereof he speaks in these epistles; and I am satisfied that Paul, as a Christian Jew, had the same liberty, and no other than that, which God granted to every Christian Jew. But as to what you say of his classing himself with the strong; I shall endeavour to open your eyes a little, by classing the Christian Jews to you, from the scripture-history, in this manner.

1. There were among the Jews, professed Christians, and even teachers, commonly called Judaizers. These insisted upon circumcision, and the keeping of the law, as the condition of justification by Christ to the Gentiles, and gave great disturbance to Paul's ministry among the Gentiles, even after the decrees that were ordained, Acts xv. in opposition to them. Paul shews no tenderness to this class, considering them as enemies of the cross of Christ, and wishing they were cut off as such.

2. Among the believing Jews, who were all keeping the law of Moses, though not Judaizers, there were some weak in the faith. These sought not to be justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness to every believer, whether circumcised or uncircumcised; and they believed, according to the revelation, that the blood of Christ brought the Gentiles near without the law, and acknowledged, that it was not necessary for them to observe it, as the Judaizers wanted them to do, Acts xv. 22. 28. & xxi. 20. 21. 25. But though they had this faith, they were not so strong in it, but that they were ready to be influenced by the Judaizers; even as we see some of the Gentiles also were, after the decrees were published, in hazard of being intangled with the yoke of bondage, by means of Judaizing teachers. And besides the instances I have formerly given, of that which was
lacking

lacking in their faith, and of the weakness of it, this is a plain evidence of the weakness of it, distinguishing them from the strong, that they were ready to judge the Gentiles, for shewing neglect to the precepts of Moses, which they themselves were nicely and scrupulously observing. As you may see from Rom. xiv. 3. 4. 10. *Let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? — Why dost thou judge thy brother?*

3. Among the believing Jews, who all kept the law, there were some, as well as among the Gentiles, strong in the faith of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and strong in the faith of his blood bringing the Gentiles near without the law, and of their not being allowed to come under the law to observe it as the Jews. These were above the influence of the temptations of the Judaizers, and zealous maintainers of the decrees against them. And though they themselves walked orderly, and kept the law as Jews, yet they strenuously maintained the freedom of the Gentiles, from the observation of the law, and rebuked the weak Jews for judging them in the neglect of it. Among these we may well class Paul himself, as the first of them, and the ringleader among them. But, however strong he, and other Jews, as well as Gentiles, might be in the faith of the revelation already made, they had as yet no ground for the faith of this, that the Jews ought as little to keep the law as the Gentiles; and accordingly they kept it themselves, while they would by no means allow the Gentiles to keep it.

6. Having thus classed Paul to you, as he classes himself, I proceed to your sixth head. And here, what I have to say as to Peter, is shortly this; That his living as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, must be, according to the text, his eating with the Gentiles, contrary to the custom and established practice of the Jewish nation. And this is what he could very well do, without transgressing any law or precept of Moses, that I know of. Yea, in eating with them, that God had sanctified, he acted, not only according to the revelation to himself, but also according to the law of Moses. And as to Paul, speaking of his manner of preaching to the Jews and Gentiles, you make him live according to the law, or against the law, as his policy directed him, for making converts; and you give a rare gloss to these words, *Being not without the law to God, but under the law to Christ*; “as being under no law, but the law of Christ.” I would

would have you here again ask your teachers, if Paul be here affirming that he is really without the law of Moses, even as the Gentiles, and not under it any more than they; and you may likewise see if, in the following verse, he be affirming that he really became weak to the weak.

7. On your seventh head, you perfect the character of Paul, which you began to draw on the 6th. But when I consider that passage you point at (Acts xxi. 20.—26.), I find him, and not him only, but James and the elders, appearing in quite another character than that which you find there. For, first, it is manifest from that passage, the believing Jews were not offended with Paul, for teaching what had been written and concluded, and what James and all the elders still maintained, viz. That the Gentiles which believe should not observe the law, (ver. 18. 25.). In the next place, it is as manifest, that the ground of their offence was an information they had received concerning him, that he taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise children, neither to walk after the customs. And then I find plainly that James and the elders, who had an account of Paul's ministry among the Gentiles from himself, (ver. 19.), do advise Paul to take an opportunity, that they put in his hand, to manifest, in the most public manner, and most openly to declare, that the information, at which the believing Jews were offended, was false, and that he was so far from teaching the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, that he himself, being a Jew, kept the law of Moses (ver. 20. 22. 23. 24.). And Paul took their advice, and the opportunity they gave him, publicly and practically, to notify the falsehood of the information, and that he himself walked orderly, and kept the law, (ver. 24. 26.). Now, if it was true, that Paul had not taught the Jews among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, if it was true that he himself, being a Jew, had not departed from the observation of the law, as to which he taught the Gentiles, that they should observe no such thing; then James and the elders directed him to a very proper way of shewing to the offended Jews the falsehood of the information, upon which their offence went. And as they acted honestly in advising him, so did he act very honestly and fairly in doing as they directed him. But what shall I think of Paul's character as an apostle, and of the truth of the New Testament; yea, I may say, what shall you think of him, if he was conscious
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to himself, that he had taught the Jews to forsake Moses, and that he himself had departed from the observation of the law, when he did what he did, that all might know he had never taught the Jews to forsake Moses, and had never forsaken him himself? And if James and the elders were not also imposed on by him, in this gross manner, wherein all the believing Jews must have been imposed on, but privy to the cheat, and art and part with him, by advising and directing in the vile plot that he executed; what account then will you make to yourself of them? And what account will you make of that forbearance that stands on such a foundation, and grows from such a root? But as I believe Paul, the pattern of following Christ, and likewise James and the elders, to have been honest men, and to have acted honestly in this matter, wherein the New Testament finds no fault with them; I find it very plain in this passage, that James and the elders knew as well as Paul, and acknowledged with him the revelation, that the Gentiles should not observe the law; and even the believing Jews, zealous of the law, had no offence at Paul on this head. And I find it as plain, from the manner wherein James and the elders refer to that revelation, that James and the elders knew of no revelation obliging the Jews to forsake Moses, and observe his precepts, no more than the Gentiles. And, by Paul's concurrence with them, it appears he himself knew of no such revelation; and nothing can be more evident in the passage than this, that he declared in the most solemn manner, before God and men, that he had never yet taught the Jews to forsake Moses, and that he had not forsaken him himself.

Lastly, If you have given me sufficient attention in going along with me through all the foregoing heads, I think your way is sufficiently paved to the last head. For, as I have shewed you before, how the strong and weak were both among the believing Jews and Gentiles; so, by what has been before demonstrated, it must appear, on the one hand, that he who believed he might eat all things, and did so, who esteemed every day alike, and regarded not the days distinguished in Moses's law, and who was ready to despise the scrupulous exactness of the weak, in the observation of that distinction of meats and days, must have been a Gentile believer, and that not a weak one, but strong in the faith of the revelation concerning the liberty of the Gentiles, like Paul himself. And, on the other hand, he
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who eateth not, and eateth herbs; who esteemeth one day above another, and regardeth the day, and is ready to judge him who, being a Gentile, regardeth not the distinction of meats and days, must have been a believing Jew, but not strong in the faith, like Paul and others, who were so far from being in hazard of grudging the liberty of the Gentiles from observing the law, that they contended zealously against their observing it.

This being fairly fixed, we shall next see, upon what footing Paul would have the forbearance to go, betwixt these different persons, the weak and strong. He forbids the weak to judge the strong, who believed he might eat all things (and believing goes on revelation); he calls him to forbear judging him that eateth, because God had received him. And as God received him into his church without the distinction of meats, by revelation, he forbids them to judge him, for not abstaining from the unclean meats, and not regarding the holy-days; because he was therein serving God, doing what he did to the Lord in thankful subjection to God, and living to the Lord whom he looked on as his Judge, who was to judge him; *i. e.* he was subject to the authority of the Lord in his word, who was to judge him by that word. Again, he forbids the strong to despise the weak believer, who did eat herbs, who abstained from the meats pronounced unclean to him in the law, esteemed one day above another, and regarded the holy-day, and calls him to forbear tempting him, by any means, to do otherwise, and to shew the neglect that he himself shewed to the distinction of those meats and days. And he lays this down as the foundation, and necessary supposition to his exhortation to forbearance, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* And this must be the persuasion of faith; because the apostle expressly tells us, in this matter, *whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* The exhortation to forbearance then supposes, that, as the strong Gentile was fully persuaded in his own mind, he ought to neglect Moses's distinction of meats and days, and this by revelation; so the weak was fully persuaded in his mind he ought not to neglect that distinction of meats and days, believing God who had interposed his authority in his law by Moses, commanding and requiring him, a Jew, to regard it, and who had never yet signified his will that he should neglect it. And so the apostle requires forbearance to him that eateth not, and regardeth the day, as doing so unto the Lord in thankful subjection to God, and

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as therein living to the Lord his judge, who was to judge him by that word which he was subject to, and studying to obey; so that if he should be any way tempted to act otherwise than he was doing, he would be tempted to fall from his subjection to the Lord. Now, let your own conscience, if it be at all obliged by revelation, draw the conclusion, and say, if the forbearance here required by the apostle goes not upon revelation, and the subjection of both parties, weak and strong, to it.

And now I also think I have stated facts fairly, and without offering any violence to them; and my conclusion, you see, must be the very reverse of yours. And having thus given you my mind directly on your eight points as you desire, I shall not add any thing further, but that I believe all they who believe on Christ through the word of his apostles, are one, and will be one, in distinction from those who profess to believe through any other word; and whoever departs from that word in any one point, departs from that unity in that point. And that you may become a partaker in this unity, is the desire of, yours, &c.

An

An Essay on UNWRITTEN TRADITION.

In a Letter to a Friend.

[First published in the year 1742.]

S I R,

April 8. 1742.

THE fact on which the argument against tradition proceeds, stands thus in my mind.

The scriptures of the Old Testament, or the writings which the Jews in the time of our Lord held as canonical and given by inspiration, and hold so to this day, were the rule to the church of the Jews when the Lord came in the flesh. But they, not holding these as the only rule of their faith and religious practice and usages, found fault with the Lord's disciples transgressing the tradition of the elders, and neglecting usages for which they had no other authority but the tradition of the ancients; and, while they were most zealous for the authority of their sacred scriptures, they made tradition the rule of interpreting them, and maintained that interpretation with great zeal against our Lord and his apostles, who always appealed to revelation, and to the scriptures themselves, against what the Jews held as received by tradition from their fathers. To this their tradition it was much owing that they persecuted the true Messiah to the death, and afterward persecuted the apostles and Christian church, till their temple was destroyed and their nation dispersed; and they stand to this day, in their dispersion, against Christ, upon their tradition as the rule of their interpretation of Old-testament scripture.

The prophets of the Old Testament pointed at this in their writings, as the cause of the opposition the Jews would make to their Messiah, and as the cause of their own ruin. See Is. viii. 14. 15. 16. & 20. & xxix. 11.—17. Which last passage you will find our Lord applying to the Jews, when he is blaming their regard to tradition, Matth. xv. 1.—9.

He called them off from their vain conversation in religion, received by tradition from their fathers, to search the scriptures, that by these means they might be led to re-

ceive the new revelation, which had its beginning in the ministry of John Baptist, that introduced his own ministry among them, which they were opposing by their tradition. And the apostles and inspired writers of the New Testament who alledge the Old-testament scripture against the Jews opposing them by the traditionary gloss, take special notice of those Jews who were induced to believe the gospel by searching the scriptures. See Acts xvii. 2. 3. 11. & 12.

The New Testament revelation was at first published, as the Old had been before, by word of mouth, and not all at once. For, even after the Lord's ascension, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, led the apostles as it were step by step into the whole truth, or into the whole of that counsel of God which they declared. They did not presently begin to write when they declared the truth concerning Christ's resurrection, whereof they were witnesses, and when they delivered the ordinances of the Lord Jesus to the disciples. Nor did every one who believed the gospel, receive it from the mouth of an apostle: the Colossians learned it of Epaphras, one of the apostle's companions; and even some of the inspired writers, as Luke and Mark, were not themselves apostles, or chosen witnesses sent to testify Christ's resurrection; but received what they wrote, the one probably from Paul, and the other from Peter.

The occasion of their beginning to write the New-testament revelation is remarkable. The disciples at Antioch were imposed on by teachers who came from Jerusalem, as from the apostles who were there, and from the elders of that church, delivering this doctrine and commandment to them, That it was necessary for them to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses; and when inquiry was made, if these apostles, or the elders of the church in Jerusalem, had given these teachers any such commandment as a part of the New-testament revelation that should go forth from Jerusalem, the apostles found it necessary to write to them in Antioch on the subject, upon which a false tradition had been delivered there, even while they were living, and capable to give it express contradiction; that, so as Moses and the prophets were read in the Jewish synagogues, this apostolic writing might be read in the churches to which it was delivered, to guard them against that false tradition. See Acts xv. and xvi. 4.

Thus the New-testament revelation began to be committed to writing, and delivered to the churches to keep; and as in these churches they attended to the reading of
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the scriptures of the Old Testament, so they were ordered and encouraged to read the New-testament scripture, as soon as they came forth to them, Col. iv. 16. 1 Thess. v. 27. Rev. i. 3. And from this beginning of writing the New-testament scripture till the time when it was completed, Christians had part of the New-testament revelation by word of mouth, and part of it by writing; as, when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, forewarning them of the great corruption of the Christian religion, the great apostasy from the apostolic rule that was to take place before the Lord's coming: against which apostasy he gives them this guard, 2 Thess. ii. 15. *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.* They were to hold the whole gospel which they had heard, as well as that part of it which they had already written to them. But when the New-testament scripture is finished, it no less contains the whole traditions of the apostles, than the Old-testament scripture contained all the traditions of Moses and the prophets, as the only rule of religious belief and practice to the Jewish church in the time of our Lord. You see how the New-testament scripture concludes with respect to them that add to it or take away from it; and Paul takes notice of some in his time that would pervert the gospel, pronouncing a curse on any that should preach it otherwise than as the first Christians received and heard it from the apostles: and how they received it from them, is as hard to know, any other way but by their writings, as it was, in the days of our Lord's flesh, to know what Moses and the prophets said but from their writings, or from the new revelation that was promised in the conclusion of them, Mal. iv. 5. 6. But there is no new revelation to come for explaining or applying the New-testament scripture, as appears from the conclusion of it.

As the Old-testament scriptures, the oracles of God, were committed to the church of the Old Testament, so are the New-testament scriptures to the Christian churches.

The Jewish church was greatly corrupted, when they fulfilled the scriptures against themselves, by condemning and killing the Messiah, out of their zeal for the tradition of their elders; yet they are not found fault with by our Lord or his apostles for corrupting the scriptures, or for being unfaithful in keeping the oracles of God pure and entire that were committed to them, but for corrupting their religion,

ligion, by the tradition of their elders, added to the scriptures, as their rule at least of interpretation, even as they have to this day their tradition as the rule of religion together with the scriptures: and therefore we cannot by any means infer, from their being intrusted with the oracles of God, and true to that trust, that therefore we ought to receive the traditions of the Talmud as the rule to the church of the Jews, together with the Old-testament scripture that we received from that church, or that we ought to receive the Jewish interpretation of those oracles of God that were committed to them.

And though the Christian churches should become as corrupt as ever the Jewish church was, even so as to become synagogues of Satan, there could no inference be drawn from thence to shew, that they were unfaithful in the trust of the oracles of God, the New-testament scripture, committed to them; nor can any inference be made, from their being faithful in that trust, to shew them faithful in any thing else, any more than the Jews, whose fall is set as an example to the Roman church to shew them their fallibility. See Rom. xi. 20. 21. & 22.

For, when we consider the design of writing the revealed will of God to Jews or to Christians, we must think the providence of God became engaged to watch over that writing: and you see that so it did in fact as to the Jews, who had it in their power to corrupt their religion, but not their inspired writings, by which they are condemned. And the same can be said of the church of Rome itself; for I would seek no other New-testament scripture, to satisfy me of the great corruption and apostasy of that church, but its own Latin translation. And it belongs not to any Christian church to tell us what books of the Old Testament are canonical or not: for Christians must hold the Old-testament scripture as the Lord and his apostles took it from the Jews, even as the Jews themselves hold it to this day.

The pure Hebrew, wherein the Old Testament was originally written, except a few passages in Chaldee, was a dead language in the time of our Lord and his apostles; when the Jews read a Chaldee or Syriac translation in their synagogues, or in places where they understood the Greek better, the Septuagint. And though they took the exactest care of every word and letter of the original Hebrew text, yet there were various readings, as appears from the *Keri* and

and *Cethib*. Nor had they the original manuscripts, but copies from them, or from other copies. Notwithstanding this, our Lord appealed to these scriptures as the Jews had them, as the only rule of their religious belief and practice; and he read the 61st chapter of Isaiah from the Chaldee translation in the synagogue, and applied it to himself even as it stands there, though not in the very same words with the pure Hebrew text, which is more exactly translated in our English Bible. The application of this to the New-testament scripture is very plain and obvious, as it is evidently founded in the nature of the thing.

And it is no less natural and easy to apply what our Lord says of the Old-testament scripture to the Jews as their only rule, unto the New-testament scripture and to Christians. And when you consider all the parts of the plain simple story I have told, you will be obliged to join me in the application: for the objections to what is alledged for tradition, will arise naturally in your mind; and I might state them at large, if it were not for this, that *verbum sapienti sat est*. I am, &c.

TRADITION by the SUCCESSION of BISHOPS, considered from its Source in the second Century.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that some proceeding from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, ———to whom we gave no such commandment. Acts xv. 24.

—As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists. —They proceeded from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they continued not, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. 1 John ii. 18. 19.

[First published in the year 1752.]

Irenæus, writing in the time of Eleutherius, who presided in the Roman church from *A. D.* 177 to 192, testifies, that Polycarp, whom he had seen in his youth, was not only taught by the apostles, and conversant with many who had seen Christ, but also constituted bishop in Smyrna by the apostles.

And Tertullian, in his book of prescriptions against heretics, writ not long, probably not twenty years after, reports, that the apostolic church of the Smyrnæans set forth Polycarp as placed first bishop there by John, even as the apostolic church of the Romans produced Clement ordained by Peter.

Both these ancient writers insist on the tradition of the churches planted by the apostles, handed down by the succession of bishops in them from the apostles, as a demonstration of the truth that they delivered against all heretics. And this great argument, in which those fathers had much confidence, in opposition to every heretic, holds to this day in the Roman church, the only remaining apostolic church that can produce a succession of bishops from the apostles. Irenæus, who gives a list of the bishops of that same church from the apostles down to Eleutherius, insists chiefly on the

Tradition by the Succession of Bishops. 369

the authority of the church of Rome in this argument. For he says, (*book 3. against heresies, chap. 3.*), "But because it is very long, in such a volume, to enumerate the successions of all the churches, we confound all those who gather unlawfully, whatever way, either by wicked self-conceit or vain-glory, or by blindness and bad opinion, when we set forth that tradition received from the apostles, and that faith reported to men by the successions of bishops reaching down to us, of the greatest and most ancient church, and known to all, founded and constituted in Rome by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul. For unto this church, on account of the more mighty principality, it is necessary, that every church, *i. e.* the faithful, who are of every place, should convene; in which the tradition that is from the apostles is always conserved by those who are from all places. The blessed apostles, then, having founded and built the church, gave the ministry of the episcopacy to Linus. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in the epistles to Timothy. And Anacletus succeeds him. And after him, in the third place from the apostles, Clement obtains the episcopacy; who both saw the blessed apostles, and conversed with them, and had before his eyes the yet sounding preaching and tradition of the apostles. Not he only; for then there were many yet remaining who had been taught by the apostles."

But our two primitive reporters of tradition are not agreed about the succession of bishops from the apostles, even in the church of Rome itself, that Irenæus says was known to all. For he places Linus first in his list after the apostles Peter and Paul. But Tertullian, upon no less authority than that of the church of Rome, places Clement first next to Peter, who ordained him. He says of heretics, in his book of prescriptions, chap. 32. "Let them then publish the originals of their churches. Let them turn over the order of their bishops descending to, by successions from the beginning, as that the first bishop should have, for his author and predecessor, any of the apostles, or apostolic men who yet persevered with the apostles. For in this manner the apostolic churches bring forth their lists, as the church of the Smyrnæans reports, having Polycarp placed by John, as that of the Romans produces Clement ordained by Peter; then to be sure the rest likewise exhibit those

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“whom they have constituted to the episcopacy by the apostles, the offsprings of the apostolic seed. Let the heretics feign any such things.” The Latins followed Tertullian: and this opinion, that Clement was the immediate successor of Peter, prevailed universally among them in the fourth century, and till the time of Jerom; while Irenæus was followed by Eusebius and the Greeks. But after Jerom rejected the opinion of the Latins, (who should have best known the succession of their own bishops), and followed Irenæus, then Linus took the first place among the Latins also; and came at last, in spite of the report that Tertullian brought from the Roman church in his time, to be universally acknowledged for the first bishop of Rome.

It is manifest, that Irenæus and Tertullian believed that Peter was at Rome, though the scripture be absolutely silent about his being there. We learn from thence of his being in several places beyond Judea and Samaria, as Antioch, Corinth, Babylon, (most probably Babylon in Egypt); and he writes to the Christians sojourning in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; but we cannot find the least trace of any connection or correspondence he had with Rome. Paul, in all the epistles he writes from Rome, makes not the least mention of him among his *fellow-prisoners and fellow-labourers*; which is very strange, if, as Irenæus says, he laboured with him in founding and building the church of Rome, and ordaining the first bishop. Yet if we believe the tradition, that Linus was the first bishop of Rome, against Tertullian, we have more ground to believe that Peter was there. And when we look to the epistle to Timothy, to which the single witness for Linus refers us, without any other *causa scientiæ*, we may as well give it to Eubulus or Pudens; or, if we please, to all the three, if tradition would allow of any more than one bishop in one church.

The only sense wherein it is possible to learn from the scripture, that the church in Rome was founded by Peter, is this, that the strangers of Rome, who were witnesses to the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and heard Peter's sermon on that day of Pentecost, were the first disciples of Christ in Rome; and being converted by his sermon, were the beginning of a church in Rome, when they returned from Jerusalem, after the fashion of the church there. And in this sense Peter might be the founder of many churches,
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and in places where he never came, as in Rome. And it would appear from the scriptures, that the church in Rome was founded before Paul saw Rome, or preached there; so that, however he might edify that church, he could not be the founder of it with Peter. For when he first came to Rome, the Christian brethren came thence to meet him as far as Appii-forum and the Three Taverns; and, writing to all the saints in Rome before he had seen them, he exhorts them as already walking in church-order, and having *him that teacheth, and him that exhorteth, and him that presideth*. Have our primitive reporters of tradition, and succession of bishops from the apostles, told us who was then presiding in Rome? No; they only tell us who was the first bishop there, after Peter and Paul being there had founded and built that church. But neither so does their witness agree. For Irenæus gives the ordination of the first bishop both to Peter and Paul, and Tertullian only to Peter. He glories over heretics in Clement, as the first from Peter; while Irenæus boasts in Linus, as the first from him and Paul, and brings down Clement to the third place. What shall we believe, if we credit the most ancient witnesses to tradition and the succession of bishops? If we will not rest in the apostolic written tradition, and account churches apostolic by the consanguinity of doctrine, as Tertullian speaks, we must even receive the testimony of the apostolic church of Rome concerning the succession of her bishops from the apostles, and repeat the genealogy of bishops from the Roman catalogue (however different from Irenæus) in this manner, 1. Peter, 2. Linus, 3. Cletus, 4. Clements, 5. Anacletus, &c. And then, if the argument of Irenæus and Tertullian against heretics be good, we must believe what the apostolic Roman church believes and delivers, that can give us a list of her bishops succeeding one another from the apostles.

Next they give us Polycarp as the first bishop of Smyrna from the apostles, and ruling that church during the time of the successors of Clement, even Evaristus, and Alexander, and Xystus, and Telesphorus, and Hyginus, and Pius, and Anicetus, all succeeding one another in Rome, till he suffered death for the faith, which is commonly reckoned to have been *A. D.* 167. Irenæus says he was ordained by the apostles. But Tertullian, perhaps thinking there was not any other apostle remaining alive at his ordination but John, tells us, the church of the Smyrnæans reports the or-

dination of Polycarp by John. Is not this he that was the *angel of the church* in Smyrna when John wrote the *Apocalypse A. D. 96*?

Irenæus is the man that saw this man that saw the apostles, or that saw the men that saw Christ. Let us hear him. He says *, “ And Polycarp, not only taught by the
“ apostles, and conversant with many who had seen Christ,
“ but also constituted by the apostles bishop in the church
“ which is in Smyrna in Asia, (whom we also have seen
“ in our early youth, for he continued long, and was very old), died a glorious and illustrious martyr, having
“ always taught those things which he learned from the
“ apostles, and which the church delivers, and which alone are true. All the churches throughout Asia testify,
“ and they who to this time have succeeded to the throne
“ of Polycarp, that Polycarp is a much more worthy of
“ credit, and more sure witness of the truth, than Valentinus and Marcion, and the rest of the evil-minded ;
“ who also, in time of Anicetus, coming to Rome, converted many of the foresaid heretics to the church of
“ God, having preached that he received from the apostles, this same one and only truth which is delivered
“ by the church.”

We may believe Irenæus testifying what he saw and heard. And so we may hear him further as to Polycarp, in his epistle to Florinus. He says to him, “ The presbyters
“ who have been before us, and who were companions of
“ the apostles, have not delivered these things to thee :
“ For I saw thee while I was yet a boy in the Lower Asia
“ with Polycarp, living splendidly in the royal court, and
“ studying to approve thyself to him : for I remember
“ much better the things that then happened, than what
“ passed lately ; for the things we learn from our childhood, growing up with the soul, are united with it ; so
“ that I can tell even the place where the blessed Polycarp sat, when he discoursed, and his incomings and
“ outgoings, and the character of his life, and the idea of
“ his body, and the discourses he made to the multitude,
“ and how he reported his conversation with John, and
“ with the rest of them that had seen the Lord, and how
“ he repeated their words, and what were the things he
“ heard from them concerning the Lord, both concerning

* Adv. her. l. 3. c. 3.

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“ his miracles and concerning his doctrine. As Polycarp
 “ received from the eye-witnesses of the word of life, so
 “ he reported all things agreeable to the scriptures. And,
 “ through God’s mercy to me, I diligently heard these
 “ things at that time; recording them, not in paper, but
 “ in my heart; and, by the grace of God, I always keep
 “ up a genuine remembrance of them. And I am able
 “ to testify before God, that if that blessed and apostolic
 “ presbyter had heard any such things, he would have
 “ cried out and stopped his ears, and, according to his
 “ custom, have said, O good God! to what sort of times
 “ hast thou reserved me, that I should bear these things?
 “ Yea, he would have fled the place wherein, sitting or
 “ standing, he had heard such words.”

We may believe, that Polycarp was an old man, and a
 presbyter or bishop in Smyrna, when Irenæus, being very
 young, saw him and heard him there; and that he had
 seen and heard John in like manner as Irenæus did him;
 and that the things he then heard from Polycarp, he now
 found to be the same that are written in the scriptures.
 But as to the story of Polycarp’s being the first bishop of
 Smyrna, ordained by the apostles or by John, (which he
 does not say that Polycarp told him), if we believe it, we
 must take it upon the same authority on which he belie-
 ved it himself: and that can be no better than that same
 upon which he also firmly believed another great historical
 fact, and contended for it against heretics, viz. That our
 Lord taught in old age, and that he was about fifty years
 old when he was crucified. For this he says *, “ All the
 “ elders testify, who in Asia conversed with John the di-
 “ sciple of the Lord, that John delivered this to them:
 “ for he continued with them even to the time of Tra-
 “ jan. Yea, some of them saw not only John, but other
 “ apostles also; and they heard the same from them, and
 “ bear witness of this account.”

Neither Tertullian nor Irenæus knew of any bishop in
 Smyrna before Polycarp, whom they set forth as the first
 from the apostles, without any mention of another prede-
 cessor but the apostle John. Yet, if we credit the history
 of the Acts of the apostles, it was not John, but Paul, that
 founded the churches of Asia; and he had presbyters there
 in the Ephesian church, whom he called *bishops*, long

* Adv. her. l. 2. c. 39.

before John had any correspondence with them that we can hear of. Paul left that church with those bishops, or presbyters, and committed it to their joint care and oversight under God; and in every church that he planted every where, he took care to have, not one bishop, but a plurality of presbyters, the same to him with bishops, ordained as soon as might be. Was there then no bishop in Smyrna, till John is said to have ordained Polycarp in the close of the first century? And how comes it that we have no account of the succession of bishops in any of the churches of Asia, those springs of tradition, till after the succession of the third pretended bishop at Rome? Polycrates of Ephesus indeed talked to Victor (the tenth in Rome from the time of John's death) of his tradition about Easter, handed down to him from Philip, one of the seven deacons, and John, who leaned on the Lord's bosom, (of whom he says odd things, as that he was priest, and wore the plate of gold), by seven bishops of his own family, and his predecessors. But these go no higher than Polycarp. From what Polycrates said against Victor, we may suppose that John and Philip are those apostles that Irenæus says ordained Polycarp; and so we have the same authority for this as for John's high-priesthood. And now when we take up with this beginning of oral tradition, all that we can learn of churches and bishops from the written tradition, must go for nothing.

It is most probable, the eighty-six years that Polycarp said at his martyrdom he had been Christ's servant, was the whole time of his life, as having been born of Christian parents, baptized in infancy about the year 81, and educated a Christian; as Irenæus seems also to have been: for the Smyrnan epistle concerning Polycarp's martyrdom says, he had a blameless conversation from his youth. But so he could be only about twenty years of age at John's death, which, at farthest, is placed in the year 101: and then he was too young for being made either presbyter or bishop. For though, in time of the apostles, extraordinary gifts were bestowed on young men as well as maidens that prophesied; yet it appears from the scripture-character of church-officers, as well as from the very name *presbyter*, that those whom the apostles ordained presbyters or bishops in the churches, were men advanced in years: and this can be said even with the consent of tradition, and the common practice in the second and third centuries. Yet

if Polycarp was twenty years of age at John's death, he might have been as well acquainted with John, as Irenæus was afterwards with him about the middle of the second century, when he might well see him bishop, or, as he also calls him, presbyter of the church in Smyrna, and no less than seventy years old. And surely Irenæus, who counted a man old at fifty, might call him very old at that age. Now, this makes Polycarp seventy-nine years old when he came from Smyrna to Rome in time of Anicetus, probably about *A. D.* 160, which was old enough in all reason for such a journey, and for conferences and disputes with heretics. At the least he must then have been seventy-five, for Anicetus did not preside in Rome before the year 156*.

He converted several heretics to the church in Rome when he came there; but could not persuade Anicetus, who was then presiding in that church, to celebrate Easter there according to the custom in Smyrna. We shall wonder at this, if we believe he could tell Anicetus, that he had it delivered to him by the apostle John, who made him bishop of Smyrna; especially when we do not hear that he pleaded the authority of Peter and Paul † against him. For Tertullian will not let us suppose, that the apostles could deliver things different among themselves, or

* *i. e.* according to Eusebius: for if we slight his authority in this case, we shall not know what to depend on. Mr Bower, in his history of the popes, on the pontificate of Pontianus, says, "With respect to his predecessors, I have adopted the chronology of Eusebius, where it does not appear that he was mistaken: for that he was mistaken in some points, is but too plain: and, for ought we know, he might have been so in many others. But as, in those dark times, we have no authentic records, no indisputable authorities to depend on, I thought it more adviseable, to tread in the footsteps of so famous and ancient a writer, than, by attempting to open a new way, perplex and confound both myself and the reader, as Pearson, Dodwell, and Pagi, have done. And it was not, I must own, without some concern, that I found a man of Dr Pearson's learning, reduced, by undervaluing the authority of Eusebius, to take for his guide a writer of no authority at all, *viz.* Eutychius of Alexandria, who flourished so late as the tenth century, and is only famous for his blunders, even in what relates to his own church."

† It is said that the keeping of that festival of Easter on Sundays, was decreed by his predecessor Pius.

contrary

contrary to one another. And if Polycarp had John's authority, with that of others who had seen the Lord, and been eye-witnesses of the word of life, for the custom of Smyrna against Anicetus, it is surprising that he did not submit to it; especially when we consider, that his declaring to the heretics, that the doctrine of the church was the same he had learned from the apostles, made such an impression on their minds, that they abjured their errors, and returned to the communion of the faithful. For would Anicetus have contemned that authority which had so much weight with the very heretics? or would Polycarp have borne with him as he did in despising it? We should rather think he had no apostolic authority to plead in the question between him and Anicetus. And this is very agreeable to what Irenæus says, of his reporting all things concurring with the scriptures: for it seems, after all the noise he makes about Polycarp's testimony, and the reports he made from the apostles, he himself learned nothing from him, besides what he found also recorded in the scriptures; and this gave weight to Polycarp's traditions after all, that they were scriptural. The tradition Irenæus had from the Asian presbyters about our Lord's age, had the more weight with him, that he thought he found the same thing written in the gospel, where the Jews say to our Lord, *Thou art not yet fifty years old*. And thus we may hold by the scriptural tradition, and follow it only, with the consent of the oldest patrons of tradition by the succession of bishops.

For Tertullian also, after he had challenged the heretics to forge any thing like the Roman and Smyrnan lists of bishops from the apostles, says, — “ For what may they not do after blasphemy? But though they should forge, they will gain nothing by it: for their very doctrine compared with the apostolic, will declare by its difference and contrariety, that it hath neither any apostle nor apostolic man for its author. For as the apostles would not have taught different things among themselves, so neither would apostolic men have published things contrary to the apostles, except such as made defection from the apostles, and preached otherwise. To this form then they will be challenged by those churches, which though they produce none of the apostles nor apostolics for their author, as being much later, and even now daily instituted; yet conspiring in the same faith,

“ they

“ they are accounted no less apostolic, because of the
 “ consanguinity of doctrine. Thus let all heresies, being
 “ challenged to either form by our churches, prove them-
 “ selves apostolic which way they think best. But such
 “ they neither are, nor can they prove what they are not ;
 “ nor are they received into peace and into communion
 “ by churches that are any way apostolical.” Then he
 proceeds to shew them before pointed out, and condemned
 in the apostolic scriptures. But might he not as well have
 come to this at first, as the shortest and surest way, to know
 what is apostolical, and what is not ?

Irenæus lived in the time when the apostolic *presiding*
presbyter (called by Justin Martyr, *the president of the bre-*
thren all partaking of the same eucharist) began to be dis-
 tinguished from the rest of the presbytery, by the name
bishop, which the apostles in their writings make common
 to all presbyters ; and by that distinguishing name began
 (contrary to the apostolic commandment, 1 Tim. v. 17.) to
 be set above them in order and degree, as the centre of
 unity and visible head of the church. This came to a full
 bearing, and was universally established in the third centu-
 ry, upon the foundation of oral tradition, in the lists of
 single bishops of churches succeeding from the apostles,
 drawn up toward the end of the second century, and in the
 epistles ascribed to Ignatius, who suffered martyrdom in the
 beginning of the century, not long after the death of John,
 A. D. 107. And here there is a very surprising difference
 betwixt the oral and scriptural tradition ; such a difference
 as makes it necessary for us to reject the one, if we follow
 the other. For the written tradition is clear for the iden-
 tity of bishop and presbyter ; the unwritten is as clear for
 the difference. The written tradition establishes a plurality
 of bishops in every church ; and we may as well seek for
 one chief deacon, as for one chief presbyter in any church
 there. The unwritten tradition establishes a single bishop
 in every church, agreeably to these famous ancient sayings,
One altar, one bishop, and One God, one Christ, one bishop.
 Two bishops presiding together in one city, is, according to
 oral tradition, an irregularity, contrary to the ecclesiastic
 disposition, contrary to the evangelic law, contrary to the
 rules of the catholic institution, and was at last condemn-
 ed as such by the council of Nice. In the written tradi-
 tion, there is much delivered, and many rules laid down
 about the unity of the catholic church, and of a particular

visible church, wherein it lies, what are the means of it, and what things contribute to it, and are subservient to it; but in all this not one syllable of one bishop, besides *Jesus Christ the pastor and bishop of our souls*, nor any the least insinuation of one catholic episcopacy. But in the oral tradition, one bishop is the centre of the Christian unity in every church, and absolutely necessary to the being of that unity, which the written commits under God to the care of a plurality of presbyters or bishops. And the catholic unity of the oral tradition stands in the one episcopacy throughout the world, whereof each one bishop in every church has his share. And, according to written tradition, *the presbyters that preside well, must be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine*: but, according to the unwritten, this double honour must be *especially* to one presbyter presiding well, and distinguished from other presbyters by the name *bishop*.

This innovation, and notable departure from the apostolic institution, did not take place without that same contention which Clement of Rome * had said the apostles foresaw would arise about the name of the episcopacy; in the foresight of which he affirmed they constituted the two orders of bishops and deacons, thereby fulfilling Is. lx. 17. and left direction [επινοησαν] how others should succeed in the room of those whom they ordained. For Tertullian †, in the end of the century, takes notice of some Christians who were requiring scripture-authority for every thing, against whom he writes for unwritten tradition. And certainly there was nothing that then took place, for which there was better reason to require scripture-authority, than the setting of the presiding presbyter above the presbytery, and appropriating to him the name of the episcopacy. Though this might have its beginning in the time of Irenæus, yet it appears not then so fully established as it came to be soon after; for, writing to Victor, who presided in the Roman church from A. D. 192 to 201, he calls them presbyters who before Soter presided in the church which he was now leading, viz. Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. Some think there can be nothing more extravagant or absurd, than to say, that the

* Epistle to the Corinthians.

† De corona militis.

lists of bishops made in the second century were lists of presbyters. But why may they not be lists of *presbyters*, seeing Irenæus, who gives the list that is most depended on, expressly calls them so? They could be no more indeed, but lists of presiding presbyters, the presiding presbyter having begun then to be chiefly considered, as most constantly residing in the church, as mostly exercised in conducting the discipline, as ordinarily the mouth of the church in the eucharistic and most solemn prayers, (therefore called the *angel of the church*), and perhaps as the oldest man in the presbytery.

Epiphanius tells us a story that suits better to the time allotted to Pius than his own time; for Pius is said to have presided in the Roman church from the death of Hyginus, A. D. 142, to his own death in 157, when he was succeeded by Anicetus. In this time Epiphanius reports, that Marcion being excommunicated by his father, whom he calls *a bishop of our holy catholic church*, and not prevailing with his father to readmit him, fled from his native place Sinope to Rome, and applied to the presbyters of that church to be received into the congregation; and, when none of them would grant him that, he betook himself to the sect of Cerdo. Then he plied the presbyters of the church with questions upon the scripture; and, not agreeing with their answers, he at last asked them plainly, Why would ye not receive me? And when they said, We cannot do this without leave from your venerable father; for there is one faith, and one concord, and we cannot oppose our good fellow-servant, your father; he then threatened to make division in their church; and accordingly made division, by propagating the heresy of Cerdo there.

As to episcopal ordination in that second century, it cannot appear that Irenæus presiding in Lyons after Pothinus, and called bishop of that place, was ordained by bishops; yea, when he went to Rome after the death of Pothinus, he was highly commended to Eleutherius from Gaul under the name of *presbyter*. See Euseb. eccl. hist. book 5. chap. 1. 3. & 4. And it can as little appear, that there was any episcopal ordination at Rome in the succession of Eleutherius, who was deacon of that church at the death of Anicetus. But Soter, the successor of Anicetus, being dead, he was chosen to govern the church in his room. They were not as yet chosen by any other besides the church alone where they presided; and episcopal ordination had not yet

taken place in time of Irenæus and Eleutherius: yea, long after that, as far down as *A. D.* 236, Fabianus, from a layman, could become a bishop even of Rome without any such ordination.

Polycarp, the presiding presbyter in Smyrna, knew nothing of the appropriation of the name *bishop* to the presiding presbyter, if we may lay any stress on his own letter to the Philippians mentioned by Irenæus*, thus directed, "Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the church of God which is in Philippi." To them he says, "Be ye subject to the presbyters and deacons, as to God and Christ." He there directs and exhorts the widows, the deacons, young men, virgins, and the presbyters, without the least mention of a bishop in distinction from the presbytery. But as the apostle Paul spake of bishops and deacons in Philippi, so does he of presbyters and deacons there. Thus Polycarp appears a perfect stranger to the doctrine of one bishop above the presbytery, that is set forth with the greatest zeal in the seven epistles of Ignatius, commonly distinguished by the name *genuine* from later forgeries. Though it be not all probable, that Polycarp was yet come to be the first man in the presbytery of Smyrna at the death of Ignatius, placed in *A. D.* 107, (and there is no notice taken of his youth, as of the youth of another bishop, in our Ignatian epistles); yet, in the postscript of his epistle to the Philippians, mention is made of epistles of Ignatius, which he had, and of his writing to him. But if Polycarp had epistles writ by Ignatius, and they contained such things as ours concerning the one bishop, they have had no influence upon him; for his own epistle shews him far from being influenced with the author's zeal, or touched with his enthusiasm on that subject. Ignatius says to the Philadelphians, "I cried, being in the midst, I spake with a great voice, *Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and the deacons.* But they were suspecting me to say these things, as having foreseen the division of some: yet he, in whom I am bound, is my witness, that I have not known from human flesh; but the spirit hath preached, saying these things, Do ye nothing without the bishop," &c.

Thus he writes as by inspiration for the one bishop. And this is the spirit that breathes in these epistles, and speaks

* Lib. 3. c. 3.

of this matter in a style so vastly different from the spirit speaking in the apostolic scriptures, that, without more, this is enough to satisfy us of the imposture. But when we compare the Ignatian way of writing on this subject with Clement's epistle, (written near the time of John's death, and not long before the martyrdom of Ignatius), and with Polycarp's epistle, and even with Justin Martyr's account of the order of the church, as well as with the story which came from the second century to Epiphanius concerning Marcion and the presbyters of Rome, we shall easily perceive these epistles could not be writ about the time of Ignatius's going to Rome, nor many years after his death. And the language of these Ignatian epistles concerning the one bishop, in distinction from presbyters, compared with Irenæus calling the bishops of Rome, and Polycarp, presbyters, may let us see, that these epistles must have been writ and published after his writing, by one zealous for the one bishop, after he had been grafted upon the scriptural stock of the presiding presbyter, and while yet there was some controversy about the name of the episcopacy, which Clement said the apostles foresaw.

Now, let us hear this Ignatius. He writes

To the Smyrnæans. — " Follow ye all the bishop as
 " Jesus Christ the Father, and the presbytery as the apostles,
 " but reverence the deacons as the commandment of God.
 " Let no man without the bishop do any of those things that
 " pertain to the church. Let that be accounted a firm eucha-
 " rist, which is under the bishop, or which he shall permit.
 " Where-ever the bishop makes his appearance, there let
 " the multitude be; as where-ever is Jesus Christ, there
 " is the catholic church. It is not lawful without the bishop,
 " either to baptize, or make a feast of charity. But what-
 " ever he shall approve, that is also well-pleasing to God,
 " that whatever is done may be stable and firm. — It is
 " good to see God and the bishop. He that honours the
 " bishop, is honoured of God. He that practises any thing
 " without the privity of the bishop, serves the devil. — I
 " salute the bishop worthy of God, and the most God-
 " becoming presbytery, the deacons my fellow-servants." —

To Polycarp, bishop of the church of the Smyrnæans.

" — Let nothing be done without thy mind, nor do
 " thou any thing without the mind of God. — Let assem-
 " blies * be more frequent. Inquire for all by name.

* Gr. synagogues.

" Despise

“ Despise not servants and serving-maids. — If any can
 “ abide in chastity to the honour of the Lord of the flesh,
 “ let him abide without glorying; but if he glory, he is
 “ destroyed; and if he would seem more than the bishop,
 “ he is corrupted. It becomes marrying men and women
 “ to come together with the mind of the bishop, that the
 “ marriage may be according to God, and not according
 “ to concupiscence. Let all things be done to the honour
 “ of God. Attend ye to the bishop, that God may also at-
 “ tend to you. My soul for them who are subject to the
 “ bishop, to the presbyters, to the deacons; and with
 “ them let me have a part in God.”

To the Ephesians. — “ I received the great multitude
 “ of you in the name of God, in Onesimus, who is in cha-
 “ rity unspeakable, but in the flesh your bishop; whom I
 “ pray you to love, according to Jesus Christ, and all you
 “ to be in his likeness: for blessed be he, who hath vouch-
 “ safed to you being worthy to possess such a bishop. —
 “ It is every way becoming to glorify Jesus Christ, who
 “ hath glorified you, that, in one subjection, ye may be
 “ perfected in the same mind, and the same judgment,
 “ and may all speak the same things concerning him, that,
 “ being subjected to the bishop and to the presbytery, ye
 “ may be wholly sanctified. — For Jesus Christ, our as-
 “ surance to live, is the mind of the Father; and so the
 “ bishops, who are appointed to the ends of the earth, are
 “ in the mind of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it becomes you to
 “ run together to the mind of the bishop, which also you
 “ do. For your presbytery, worthy of a name, worthy of
 “ God, is so concordant to the bishop as the strings to the
 “ harp. For this Jesus Christ is sung in your unanimity
 “ and symphonizing charity. — For if I, in a little time,
 “ have had such a familiarity with your bishop, being not
 “ human but spiritual, how much more do I count you
 “ happy, who are so conjoined as the church to Jesus
 “ Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, that all things
 “ may symphonize in unity?

“ Let no man be deceived; if any man be not within
 “ the altar, he comes short of the bread of God. For if
 “ the prayer of one and a second has such force, how
 “ much more that of the bishop, and of the whole church?
 “ He then who comes not into one place, is already proud,
 “ and hath condemned himself; for it is written, *God re-
 “ sisteth the proud.* Let us therefore study not to resist
 “ the

“ the bishop, that we may be subject to God. And as
“ much as one sees the bishop silent, let him dread him
“ the more. For whomsoever the master of the house
“ sends to his own œconomy, we ought to receive him so
“ as him that sent him. Therefore it is manifest, that the
“ bishop ought to be respected as the Lord himself. —
“ That ye may obey the bishop and the presbytery with
“ undivided mind, breaking one bread.”

To the Magnesians. — “ I have been dignified to see
“ you, by your bishop Damas, worthy of God, and the
“ worthy presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius, and my fel-
“ low-servant the deacon Sotio ; whom may I enjoy,
“ because he is subject to the bishop, as to the grace of
“ God, and to the presbytery, as to the law of Jesus
“ Christ. But it also becomes you not to make free with
“ the age of the bishop, but to give him all reverence, ac-
“ cording to the power of God the Father, as I have
“ known even the holy presbyters not assuming on the
“ appearing younger state, but as wise in God, yielding
“ to him ; yet not to him, but to the Father of Jesus
“ Christ, the bishop of all. Therefore to the honour of
“ him, who hath willed us, it is becoming to obey with-
“ out any hypocrisy, seeing one deceives not this seen bi-
“ shop, but would impose upon the unseen. — It is be-
“ coming, therefore, not only to be called Christians, but
“ also to be ; as also some indeed call the bishop, yet do
“ all things without him. But such appear to me, not to
“ have a good conscience for their not being firmly ga-
“ thered together according to the commandment. —
“ Study to do all things in the unanimity of God, the bi-
“ shop presiding in the place of God, and the presbyters
“ in place of the council of the apostles, and the deacons,
“ who are most delicious to me, being intrusted with the
“ ministry of Jesus Christ, who was before the world with
“ the Father, and hath appeared in the end. — Let there
“ be nothing among you that shall be able to divide you,
“ but be united to the bishop, and to them that preside in-
“ to the type and doctrine of incorruption. As therefore
“ the Lord without the Father, being united, did nothing,
“ neither by himself nor by his apostles, so neither do ye
“ any thing without the bishop and the presbyters. —
“ Study then to be established firmly in the doctrines of
“ the Lord and the apostles, that all things, whatsoever ye
“ do, may be prospered in flesh and spirit, faith and love,
“ in

“ in the Son and the Father and in the Spirit, in the
 “ beginning and in the end, with your most worthily de-
 “ cent bishop, and the worthily-plaited spiritual crown of
 “ your presbytery, and your deacons according to God.
 “ Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus
 “ Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the
 “ apostles to Christ and the Father and the Spirit; that
 “ unity may be both fleshly and spiritual. — There sa-
 “ lute you the Ephesians from Smyrna, (from whence I
 “ also write unto you); — together with Polycarp the bi-
 “ shop of the Smyrnæans.”

To the *church which is in Philadelphia*. — “ Which I
 “ salute in the blood of Jesus Christ; — especially if they
 “ be in one with the bishop, and the presbyters who are
 “ with him, and the deacons manifested in the mind of
 “ Christ, whom, according to his own will, he hath esta-
 “ blished in the firmness of his Holy Spirit; which bishop
 “ I have known to have obtained the ministry that is be-
 “ come common, neither from himself, nor by men, nor
 “ according to vain-glory, but in the love of God the Fa-
 “ ther, and the Lord Jesus Christ, with whose moderation I
 “ have been astonished, who being silent, can do greater
 “ things than vain talkers. — Flee division and evil doc-
 “ trines; but where the pastor is, there, as sheep, do ye
 “ follow. — As many as belong to God and to Jesus
 “ Christ, they are with the bishop. — Study then to use
 “ one eucharist; for there is one faith of our Lord Jesus
 “ Christ, and one cup to the oneness of the blood, one
 “ altar, as one bishop, together with the presbytery and
 “ the deacons my fellow-servants, that whatsoever ye do,
 “ ye may do according to God. — The Lord therefore
 “ forgives all penitents, if they repent into the unity of
 “ God and the council of the bishop.”

To the Trallians. — “ Your bishop Polybius, who came
 “ by the will of God and of Jesus Christ, in Smyrna, and
 “ so rejoiced with me, the bound in Christ Jesus, as I might
 “ behold your whole multitude in him. — For when ye
 “ are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to
 “ me living not after the manner of man, but according
 “ to Jesus Christ. — It is therefore necessary, as ye do,
 “ that ye should practise nothing without the bishop. But
 “ be subject also to the presbytery, as to the apostles of Je-
 “ sus Christ. — But the deacons also, being the mystery
 “ of Jesus Christ ought to please all every way; for they
 “ are

“ are not the ministers of meats and drinks, but the ser-
 “ vants of the church of God. They should therefore
 “ guard against all accusations as fire. In like manner,
 “ let all revere the deacons, as also the bishop, as Jesus
 “ Christ, being the Son of the Father, but the presbyters
 “ as the council of God, and as the conjunction of the a-
 “ postles. Without these the church is not called; con-
 “ cerning which things I am persuaded you so hold: for I
 “ have received, and have with me the pattern of your
 “ charity in your bishop, whose very constitution is great
 “ instruction, but his meekness is power, whom I suppose
 “ even Atheists revere. — Being inseparable from God
 “ and Jesus Christ, and the bishop, and the orders of the
 “ apostles. He that is within the altar is pure; which is
 “ to say, he that does any thing without the bishop, and
 “ presbytery, and deacon, is not pure in conscience. —
 “ For it becomes each one of you, and especially the pres-
 “ byters, to refresh the bishop, to the honour of the Fa-
 “ ther of Jesus Christ, and of the apostles. — Farewell in
 “ Jesus Christ, being subject to the bishop as to the com-
 “ mandment, and likewise to the presbytery: and each
 “ man of you, love one another with undivided heart.”

To the Romans. — “ Remember in your prayer the
 “ church which is in Syria, which, in place of me, uses the
 “ Lord as pastor, who says, *I am the good pastor*: and he
 “ alone shall do the bishop’s work to her, and your love
 “ to him. But I am ashamed to be called one of them;
 “ for I am not worthy, being the last of them, and an
 “ abortive. But I have obtained mercy to be somebody,
 “ if I shall enjoy God.”

This is the Ignatian way of speaking of the one bishop.
 And we may easily perceive, that it is not agreeable to the
 language of any writer, at any time of the second century
 before Tertullian, who wrote in the very conclusion of it,
 or beginning of the third, and was the first contender for
 unwritten tradition as the rule of Christian practice, toge-
 ther with the scriptures. He indeed agrees with these e-
 pistles in the main scope of them: for in his book of bap-
 tism, chap. 17. telling us to whom it belongs to baptize,
 he says, “ The chief priest, who is the bishop, has indeed
 “ the power of giving it, next to him the presbyters and
 “ deacons, yet not without the authority of the bishop;
 “ for the honour of the church, which being safe, peace is
 “ safe. Otherwise laics may do it.” We may therefore

allow these Ignatian epistles to be as old as Tertullian's time of writing. And indeed they cannot well be reckoned later: for Origen quotes passages from them after the beginning of the third century: and they are not so agreeable to that century, especially toward the middle of it, when the bishop's church began to be larger than a single congregation, and when they talked of a catholic church with one episcopacy throughout the world, whereof every bishop has his share: for the church of the Ignatian bishop and presbytery (even in Ephesus) is evidently but one congregation, all praying together with the bishop, and all partaking of one eucharist; and the Ignatian catholic church is where Christ is, as the bishop's church must be where he is. So that neither *diocesan* episcopacy, nor *classical* presbytery, can have any the least pretence in the Ignatian epistles.

The order of the one bishop being the general disposer and manager of all things within the bounds of his jurisdiction, nothing being done there without his consent and approbation, and the presbyters and deacons, his assistants or his senate; this order, it is now said, was probably introduced, according to Grotius, in imitation of the Jewish synagogues; for each synagogue had its ruler, who presided over the rest, its pastors, and its eleemosynaries. To the ruler succeeded the bishop, to the pastors the presbyters, to the eleemosynaries the deacons.

This agrees perfectly with the Ignatian bishop; for according to this the bounds of the one bishop's jurisdiction was, even as the synagogue, no more but a single congregation. But it cannot easily appear, that there was in the synagogue a single ruler presiding over its pastors and eleemosynaries: for if this was the *ARCHISYNAGOGOS*, (translated *chief ruler*, Acts xviii. 8. 17.), we find expressly a plurality of these also in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, Acts xiii. 15. where the word being in the plural, is translated only *rulers*. If it was the *angel* or messenger of the congregation, by whose mouth the whole synagogue ordinarily sent up their prayers to God; he that answers to him in the Christian church, is the *presbyter presiding well*, or, as Justin Martyr calls him, the *president of the brethren*, not of presbyters, but of the Christian brotherhood, all partaking of the same eucharist. And we have seen before, from 1 Tim. v. 17. that the written tradition expressly opposes the setting of him above the presbytery.

If the postscript of Polycarp's epistle, mentioning epistles writ by Ignatius, that he had, be not added to support the forgery, we may be very sure from Polycarp's own letter, that these are not the same epistles he then had. Nor is it likely that Irenæus ever saw these epistles. He indeed mentions a known saying of Ignatius, which is found in one of them. But it behoved the impostor, in writing, not to neglect any such saying: and therefore there is no reason to allow the Ignatian epistles to be older than toward the end of the second century, when this innovation, of one bishop in every church above the presbytery, took place; and then they may be acknowledged to have been writ by some zealous promoter of it. This was a season of forging and interpolating writings, as may appear from what Dionysius of Corinth writes of the treatment his own epistles met with, and from the false Sybilline oracles, forged a little before in the reign of Antoninus Pius, and from that time cited by the fathers, whose minds were corrupted by the pretended Sybil, from the true apostolic doctrine of the state of the dead. And the tradition flowing from this source, issued in prayers for the dead, and then at last in purgatory; even as the whole Roman hierarchy sprung out at first out of the one bishop in every church above the presbytery. And this was a time when such forgeries obtained credit easily, especially when the authority of a famous martyr was in the case. And when the practice that this author labours to establish by his letters in the name of Ignatius, came to be universally established, it is not to be wondered at, that the authority of the ancient writing, that supports it, was established with it, and never called in question, till it appeared to them who betook themselves to the apostolic scriptures as the only rule of Christianity, that the authority of this Ignatius was set up in the plainest opposition to the apostolic authority in the scriptures.

As the distinction of bishop and presbyter was fully established in the third century, agreeably to the Ignatian epistles, it is no wonder that they should be of undoubted authority in the time of Eusebius, who makes particular mention of them as writ by Ignatius. And therefore, when the question is, Whether they were forged toward the end of the second century to support that distinction when it began to take place? his testimony to these epistles must be quite out of the question. Origen is the first that cites

them after the beginning of the third century: for, as was noticed before, Irenæus does not quote these epistles; but writes of a remarkable saying of the famous martyr Ignatius, even as he mentions the sayings of Polycarp, and other old presbyters, not written in any epistles. And the great difference of his style from that of the Ignatian epistles on the distinction of the one bishop from the presbytery, is a very strong presumption of his being a stranger to these epistles, or else of his not acknowledging them as the epistles of Ignatius: for, if he had believed them, would he have confounded bishop and presbyter as he has done, so inconsistently with the great scope and design of them? So that we may say, these epistles were forged toward the end of the second century, that time of making and believing such false writings, when the apostolic presiding presbyter began to be distinguished from the presbytery by the name *bishop*, and by that title set above them, as they were above the deacons, in order and degree.

And this was in that time when the lists of single bishops succeeding one another from the apostles, in several churches, were framed. As to these lists, we have already seen what sort of dependence may be had on Irenæus and Tertullian, and what stress may be laid on the report of Polycrates concerning John, and the bishops succeeding from him in Asia. But Hegesippus, who wrote at Rome in the time of Eleutherius, gave a catalogue of the bishops of Jerusalem, that is much boasted of in supporting the Ignatian distinction of bishop and presbyter: and therefore we may take a specimen of that author from Eusebius, whereby we may be able to determine what stress may be laid on him in this contrast betwixt the scriptural and oral tradition. Eusebius, in his history, book 2. chap. 22. gives us these words of Hegesippus. “ James, the Lord’s brother, who from the
 “ times of the Saviour to our age, was called the *Just* by
 “ all, (for many bore the name *James*), took upon him
 “ the government of the church, together with the other
 “ apostles. He was holy from his mother’s womb, drank
 “ not wine and strong drink, abstained from the flesh of
 “ animals; his head was never shaved with a razor, nor was
 “ his body anointed with oil, or washed in the bath. To
 “ him alone it was lawful to enter into the holy of holies:
 “ for he did not wear woollen cloaths, but linen only. It
 “ was his custom to enter the temple alone, and setting his
 “ knees on the ground to ask forgiveness for the sins of
 “ the

“ the people; whose knees became hardened with tubercles that they had contracted, because he so assiduously
 “ kneeled as a camel, both to worship God in an august
 “ and holy manner, and to pray earnestly for pardon to
 “ the people; who, for peculiar excellence of righteousness, found the name of the *Just*, and of *Oblias*, which
 “ may be interpreted, *the people's defence and righteousness*, even as the prophets mention concerning him.”
 Then he goes on to tell a fabulous story of the manner of his martyrdom. This James is the first in the catalogue of Hegesippus, who makes him not the sole bishop of Jerusalem, but together with the rest of the apostles. But Eusebius, who takes his account of the first bishops of Jerusalem from him, gives us this story of the succession of Simeon to James, Hist. book 3. chap. 10. “ When James had died
 “ a martyr, and Jerusalem a little after had been taken,
 “ and so destroyed, it is reported, that the apostles and
 “ disciples of the Lord, who yet enjoyed this light, together with the Lord's kinsmen according to the flesh, (for
 “ many of them lived to that time), gathered from all
 “ places, and took counsel together, who should be judged
 “ worthy to succeed in the place of James: all therefore,
 “ with one consent, esteemed Simeon, the son of that Cleophas mentioned in the holy scripture of the gospel, to
 “ be meet and fit to receive the seat and prefecture of the
 “ church there instituted, who is said to have been the Saviour's cousin: for Hegesippus tells that Cleophas was
 “ Joseph's brother.” And he gives us these words of Hegesippus on this subject, book 4. chap. 21. “ After James,
 “ surnamed the *Just*, was slain, as was the Lord himself,
 “ for the defence of the truth, Simeon, the son of Cleophas, who was Christ's uncle, was created bishop; whom
 “ all the disciples, by suffrages, appointed to that administration, in the second place, because he was the Lord's
 “ cousin.” Eusebius, in his history, book 3. chap. 26. & 29. after telling from Hegesippus a story of this Simeon suffering under Trajan grievous stripes for many days, when he was 120 years old, *A. D.* 110, with a patience that astonished his persecutors, and at last suffering a death not unlike the Lord's passion, for that he was of the lineage of David, and a Christian; he then tells us, that after Simeon had thus died a martyr, a certain Jew named *Justus*, one of those innumerable circumcised who had betaken themselves to the faith of Christ in that time, occupied next the
episcopal

episcopal seat in Jerusalem. Then, book 4. chap. 5. he gives us no less than twelve bishops after this Justus, succeeding one another, to the siege of Jerusalem, under Adrian, which his Chronicle places *A. D.* 137; after which the bishops of Jerusalem were no more of the Jews. The bishops of Jerusalem, from the beginning to that time, are, according to Eusebius, 1. James, called the Lord's brother, 2. Simeon, 3. Justus, 4. Zaccheus, 5. Tobias, 6. Benjamin, 7. John, 8. Matthias, 9. Philip, 10. Seneca, 11. Justus, 12. Levi, 13. Ephres, 14. Joseph, 15. Judas. By these fifteen of the circumcision, it seems, the truth was handed down from the apostles to that time; and then it came into the hands of the uncircumcised, and was delivered down from thence to the end of the century by fifteen of them also, succeeding one another, of whom Eusebius, *Hist.* book 5. chap. 12. gives us a list from the tables of successions kept in that church of Jerusalem.

Eusebius believed, that all these thirty were single bishops, in distinction from the presbytery, succeeding one another in Jerusalem from the apostles to the end of the second century; though Hegesippus, from whom he takes his history of the first bishops, makes not James the Lord's brother sole bishop in Jerusalem, but together with the rest of the apostles; and though he himself tells us, that Narcissus (the last of his list of thirty) and Alexander were bishops together in Jerusalem at the same time, (*Hist.* book 6. chap. 9.). And this, he says, was brought about by divine revelation, and consented to by all the neighbouring bishops.

By this time we have seen enough to let us know what account we should make of the first reporters of the successions of bishops from the apostles. But as to the argument drawn from these successions against heretics by Irenæus and Tertullian, we may indeed believe, that Polycarp and the bishops of Rome did not hold those monstrous errors against which they wrote: yet, when the second century was finished, and the third now begun, it came to be a question, What was the faith concerning Christ that was delivered down from the apostles to the end of the century by these successions, and even by the succession of bishops in Rome itself *? Upon this question, the contenders for the apostolic faith were obliged to have recourse, first to the testimonies

* Euseb. eccl. hist. book 5. chap. 27.

of the holy scripture, and then to the books of Irenæus, and other authors of the second century, constantly affirming that faith; and lastly to the many psalms and hymns * composed and writ by the faithful brethren of those former times, in order to shew what was the faith of the Son of God, that came down from the apostles to that time. But for Victor, the last in the succession of the second century, no more could be said but this, That Theodotus, a chief denier of that faith, had been excommunicated by him. This same Victor, whom we may reckon the first real bishop of Rome, in distinction from the old presiding presbyters, was a man who could excommunicate people holding the same thing with himself, and only differing from him about the manner of holding it, as he did those of Asia; so that his excommunicating Theodotus is but a slender proof of what he believed in the main differently from him. He favoured the Montanists, and was drawn off from them by Praxeas, the father of the Patripassian heretics, who had his ear; and probably by his persuasion he was led to excommunicate the opposite heretic Theodotus; for we do not hear of his censuring Praxeas, who gained many proselytes in Rome. What is the faith then that we are to receive from tradition by the succession of bishops, even in Rome itself, to which Irenæus refers us?

* This is supported by Pliny's report concerning the Christians to Trajan, that they assembled together to sing hymns to Christ as God. And they might as well have cited Lucian, sneering in his *Philopatriis*, *The God reigning on high, great, eternal, heavenly; the Son of the Father; the Spirit proceeding from the Father; One of Three and Three of One; esteem thou these to be Jove! think this to be God!* and likewise Celsus, writing against Christians as believing such a man as Jesus to be God, and worshipping him as the Most High. For even from these enemies we shall better know what was the faith of Christians at that time, than from the Christian writers labouring to explain and defend the faith philosophically.

Three successive DISCOVERIES of GOD in his WORKS; and MAN's Admission to three corresponding RESTS with GOD therein; to wit, that in the Garden of Eden, that in Canaan, and the true, spiritual, eternal Rest.

[Wrote about the year 1736, and now first printed.]

HEBREWS IV. I.—II.

INTRODUCTION.

IN this passage the apostle is shewing the excellency of the Christian rest, as the antitype of that rest into which Israel was led by Joshua, and the evil of coming short of it by unbelief, as Israel in the wilderness; to whom God sware, that because of their unbelief they should not enter into the rest that he promised.

He proves this by the words of David, Psal. xcv. 7.—11. And by the appointing of another day of rest than the seventh day, he points out the Christian rest, to which that day belongs, as distinct from, and far excelling the rest that went before. His words are, ver. 3. "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Ver. 4. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Ver. 5. "And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest." Ver. 6. "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached *, entered not in because of unbelief." Ver. 7. "Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Ver. 8. "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." Ver. 9. "There remaineth there-

* or, who were first evangelized. See ver. 1. & 2.

"fore a sabbatism * to the people of God." Ver. 10. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

We see three different *rests* spoken of here; *first*, the *rest* from the works of creation; *secondly*, the *rest* in the promised land, into which God sware, that the unbelieving Israelites should not enter; and, *thirdly*, the *rest* into which Jesus Christ is entered. We have likewise here two days of rest; the seventh day on which God rested from all his works, and another day on which Christ rested from his own works, as God did from his own, and entered into his rest. And we may see afterward why there was not another day for the rest into which Joshua led the people of Israel.

All these three rests are by the apostle called *rests of God*. As to the first, it is said expressly, "God did rest the seventh day from all his works:" and of the second he says, "If they shall enter into my rest:" and with respect to the third, the apostle says, ver. 1. & 2. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." And ver. 10. 11. "For he that is entered into his rest, he hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

As it is natural to us to seek rest, the apostle plainly enough intimates here, that man's proper rest is a partaking with God in his rest: *If they shall enter into my rest; and, A promise being left us of entering into his rest.*

THE FIRST REST.

SECT. I. *Wherein man's primitive rest with God consisted.*

MAN's primitive rest consisted in his partaking with God in his rest, when he rested on the seventh day from all his works. The works of the six days could not give the Deity any disturbance, or take any thing from that eternal happiness he hath in the enjoyment of his own infinite

* σαββατισμος.

perfections; nor could the finishing of the works of the six days add any thing to this. But by the display of his glory in these works to man, who was made capable to behold his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, and to glorify him as God, with thankfulness in the use of these works, man was admitted to partake with the Deity in the rest which he hath in these perfections, that were displayed to him in the finished works of the six days. And this was the rest of the seventh day.

SECT. II. *God's delight in his works how intimated.*

WHEN we observe, in Moses's account of the works of the six days, that it is said, with respect to each work, *God saw it was good*; and when all the works were finished, *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold very good*; the divine delight and satisfaction seems to be thereby expressed. But no mere creature, nor all the creatures together, considered in themselves, could be the object of the divine delight. So that it will not be easy to understand this, without the explication that is given of it in the 8th chapter of the Proverbs, by the person who is there called *Wisdom*, and in the New Testament*, the *Word*. With a plain enough reference to this passage, he says, ver. 27. "When he prepared the heavens, I was there; "when he set a compass on the face of the deep." Ver. 29. "When he appointed the foundations of the earth." Ver. 30. "Then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight." This person who is said to have been daily his delight in the creation, is pointed out to us in that passage, as the foundation and spring of all the counsels of God with respect to all his works. Ver. 22. "The Lord possessed me, the beginning, his way, "before his works from thence." This is he "by whom, "and for whom all things were created, that are in "heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible;—" "who is before all things, and in whom all things consist†." The works that were made by him, and for him, and that consist in him, the beginning, were the object

* John i. 1. 2. 3. *Λογος* signifies *wisdom* or *reason*, as well as *word*.

† Col. i. 16. & 17.

of the divine delight no otherwise than as they thus stood related to him, who says, — “Rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of Adam.” If his glory was displayed in the creation, and in the making man, much more was it to be manifested among the fallen race of Adam. And when this same person appears among the sons of Adam, the Father says of him, *Behold mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth* *. And all the delight that God is said to take in them whom he hath chosen in him, and in the glorious works of salvation by him, is in him in whom they are chosen, by whom they are saved, and to whom they are united and conformed.

SECT. III. *A distinction of three divine persons in the Godhead pointed out in the scripture-account of the creation, with their distinct agency.*

AS the scripture asserts the unity of the Godhead in the name *Jehovah*, so it points out a society of three persons in that Godhead, in the name *Elohim*, which is plural †, and denotes a plurality of persons in the Deity, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah.* With this blessed society of the divine persons man is admitted to partake, when he has his true rest; and so he shares in God's rest. The society of the divine persons in the works of creation, is pointed out to us in these words, *I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* Yea, we find the three persons distinctly pointed out to us, and their society together, in the history of the creation, Gen. i. 2. *The Spirit Elohim made the matter of the heavens to move upon the face of the abyfs.* His emblem is air or wind ‡; and as the hieroglyphic of air was

* If. xlii. 1.

† Gen. i. 26. “And Elohim said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.” Gen. iii. 22. “And Jehovah Elohim said, Behold the man is become as one of us.” Gen. xx. 13. “When Elohim caused me to wander (*errare fecerunt*) from my father's house.”

‡ *Ruach* is the name both of the air, or wind, and of the eternal Spirit; and when the Holy Ghost descended on the disciples, he came with a rushing mighty wind, Acts ii. 2. See likewise John iii. 8.

a winged creature, especially an eagle; so the expression that is used to signify the spirit making the darkness (or the matter of the heavens void of light) that was upon the face of the abyfs to move, is the same that is made use of to signify an *eagle's fluttering over her young*, Deut. xxxii. 11. And this may serve to let us understand the meaning of that scripture expression, *The shadow of his wings*.

And Elohim said, *Let there be light*, ver. 3. Here the agency of that person who is called the *Word* is pointed out to us, and is first mentioned at the making of the light, which, both in the Old Testament and in the New, is made the emblem of that person. And as horns rising on the head of a horned creature, especially an ox or bull, are the hieroglyphic of the power of the rays of light, coming forth from the fire; so we find this person called in scripture, *The horn of salvation whom the Father hath raised up* *. And the emblem of the Father, again, is fire †. Now, that person whose emblem is the light, is likewise called the *lion*; for that creature was the hieroglyphic of light, on account of his sharp piercing light, and he has his name in the Hebrew from seeing.

And Elohim saw the light that it was good, ver. 4. Here the part of that person who is called the *Father* is pointed out to us; which we may understand by what the *Word* says, Prov. viii. 30 *Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight*. This is first mentioned at the making of the light, the emblem of that person who says, *I was daily his delight*. With respect to this, it is first said, *God saw that it was good*. And at making of the instruments of light, from ver. 14. to 18. Moses speaks thus, “ God said, Let there be lights. — And God made the lights. And God saw that it was good.” And from ver. 20. to 22. “ God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature, life and fowl. — And God created — every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth, and every winged fowl. — And God saw that it was good.” And ver. 24. 25. “ God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature. — And God made the beast of the earth. — And God saw that it was good.”

* Luke i. 69. & Psal. cxlviii. 14.

† The Egyptians worshipped the fire in the orb of the sun by the hieroglyphic of an ox or bull.

Thus Moses points out to us the distinct agency of the three divine persons in the making of the world, and their society in the several works of creation. When he says God *said* or *spake* any thing, we are to understand that person of the Elohim whom the scripture calls the *Word*, by whom all things were created. And when he says God *made*, or *did*, or *created* any thing, we must understand that person of the Elohim who is called the *Spirit*, to whom the working part is peculiarly ascribed, as the person in whom the power of the Godhead is especially manifested. And when he says, *God saw it good*, we must understand that person of the Elohim, who is called the *Father*, of whom the Son or the Word says, *I was daily his delight*; even the same person who says of him again, with respect to his work of redemption, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*.

SECT. IV. *The seventh day set apart for this rest, and how this rest was lost.*

UNLESS we shall say, that the import of the words *Jehovah Elohim* was hid from Adam, who was made to know language in an extraordinary manner, and was capable to give names to the creatures suited to their nature, we cannot be positive to say, that he was ignorant of the Trinity. And it is hard to say, that Adam, who was made fit to behold and glorify God, as manifested in the works that were finished in the six days, and to rest with God on the seventh day, in the contemplation of these works, was yet ignorant of the society of the divine Three in these works which is pointed out to us by Moses in his history of them: for how could man rest with God in all the works of the six days as very good, without any knowledge of him who says, "Then was I
" by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily
" his delight." It would seem then, that man's primitive rest lay much in the communion he had with God in this *delight*.

This was the rest of the seventh day, man's first rest with God, which he lost by his disobedience to the command that was given him, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so called, because it was the proof and trial of his obedience or disobedience. For his obedience

dience or subjection to the divine authority in all that he did, could not be manifest, but in his stedfast observance of a command which had no reason, known to him, but the will of his Sovereign Lord, and that in opposition to all temptations to seek himself in the way of disobedience to it. And whatever good we may suppose him to do, while disobedient to such a command, not one thing he did could in that case come under the name of obedience or subjection to his Sovereign Lord and Lawgiver. By man's disobedience to this trying command, sin, which is disobedience to the law of God, entered into the world; and he, with all his posterity, stood debarred from rest, and appointed to death by the curse of the law, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die *." By the inflicting of this sentence on all men, and even infants in the womb, who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, it is manifest, that this was said to Adam as a public person, and to all his posterity, considered in him as the head †; and so they lost rest in him. When sin entered into the world, and man became evil, man's rest with God upon the finished works, that were all very good, was broke; and the infinite goodness that was manifested unto him in the works that were all very good, and in the rest he enjoyed with God, could not but give him disturbances: for the divine goodness ‡ is infinitely opposite to evil; and when evil was found in him, the view he had of that goodness, while he himself was good or obedient, served now to make him miserable, when he became a sinner; so that he could no more rest with God now, than darkness can dwell with the purest light.

Having thus lost his rest, he had no more interest in the seventh day, which was the sign and the mean appointed by God with reference to man's resting with him. And therefore, if God had not revealed his design of restoring sinners of mankind to rest after they had lost it, there could not have been any more use of a day of rest among mankind. If any of the Gentiles, who had not the law of Moses, acknowledged the seventh day, or any way used it as a day of rest; this could not be derived from the original institution of that day before the fall; but from revelation made to fallen man, from whom they had, by tradi-

* Gen. ii. 17. † Rem. v. 12.—19.

‡ 1 John i. 5. 6. 7.

tion, their worship by sacrifice, with the rites belonging to that.

The SECOND REST.

SECT. I. *God's rest with Israel in Canaan, and the works on which it was founded.*

THE apostle insists more largely on God's rest in the promised land, from his working in the performance of his promise, of bringing the family of Jacob, Abraham's seed, from the bondage and affliction of Egypt, to enjoy the land of Canaan in the state of a free nation with him their God. This is the rest into which the Israelites, who saw his working, and tempted and provoked him in the wilderness by their unbelief, could not enter: for "he swore in his wrath, They shall not enter " into my rest *."

God's working in the performance of his promise, to bring Israel out of Egypt into the promised land, was intended to manifest him to Israel, as the creator and maker of the heavens and the earth; and so to demonstrate him to be the true God, in opposition to the gods of Egypt and Canaan, and all the false gods of the nations. And so he appointed the seventh day as a sign betwixt him and them, that in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed †.

SECT. II. *God's covenant with Israel represented the law given to Adam, and prefigured the new covenant.*

THE covenant that God made with Israel, when he took them by the hand, to bring them out of Egypt, and give them the promised land, was a representation of the law that was broken by Adam, giving life only to them that should continue in all things required in the book of the law to do them, and appointing death for every disobedience †. This representation of the law that was broken by Adam, was given to Israel with design that

* Heb. iii. 8.—11. 16.—19.

† Exod. xxxi. 16. 17.

‡ Gal. iii. 10.—13.

it should be fulfilled *, in due time, by Jesus Christ the promised seed, the Redeemer from the curse of the law, who was then in the loins of the people of that nation. And accordingly he fulfilled that law, in fulfilling the law of Moses, which was the representation of it. Therefore the day of rest, which Adam broke, was enjoined in the law of Moses, till it should be fulfilled by Jesus Christ, who was to bring about the true rest. The rest of God, in Canaan, from his working to bring Israel out of Egypt into that land, was no more but a type or figure of the rest of Jesus Christ, into which, by the gospel, we are called to enter. The whole of the apostle's discourse on the 95th Psalm plainly imports this; and the conclusion he makes expressly declares it, ver. 11. "Let us labour therefore," says he, "to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." He shews that the rest given to Israel by Joshua, by whom God brought them into the promised land, and settled them there, was not the true rest, and therefore but a figure; for he says, ver. 8. "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." And this is the reason why another day than the seventh was not appointed for the rest in the land of Canaan; because that was not the true rest that God intended, but only a type of it; but when that true rest came, then came another day.

The apostle plainly signifies, that the Holy Ghost is speaking to the New-testament church, in the words he cites from the 95th Psalm, and so he directs them to those Hebrews, whom he is exhorting to steadfastness in the faith, and perseverance in the profession of it, as the evidence of their being true members of Christ's church. And when he makes the promise of rest to Israel a type of the promise of entering into his rest, which the church of the New Testament hath; and their behaviour, with respect to that promised rest, with God's dealing with them, an example unto Christians, he only declares the import of these words, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, — when your fathers tempted me. — Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.* The Israelites in the wilderness are called *our fathers* †, because of them as concerning the flesh Christ

* Rom. x. 4. 5. Gal. iv. 4. 5.

† Compare Heb. viii. 8. 9.

came *, of whom springs the New-testament church, his seed †; and because they were our examples: for so he makes them, when he says, *Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me; to whom I sware, they should not enter into my rest. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it; — lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. — For we are evangelized, even as they; but the word of hearing did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

He lays the foundation of all that he says of the Israelites as our examples in this, that the Lord's voice to them, in his promise to give that nation rest with him in Canaan, and in his covenant which he made with them, to bring them into the promised rest, was a type, figure, or pattern of his voice to us, in the promise of giving us eternal rest with Jesus Christ, serving to bring us into his rest ‡. For though God's promise to give Israel rest in the land of Canaan, be vastly different from the promise of his rest with Christ to the New-testament church; yet he calls both these *the gospel*; and he says of them who were brought into the profession of the faith of the promise of Christ's rest, in the New Testament, that they were evangelized, even as the Israelites, to whom God spake in the covenant that had the promise of the earthly rest; and this could not be said, considering the difference of the two promises, if the one had not been intended by God as the type, figure, or example of the other. Therefore the apostle makes the unbelief of the promise of rest in Canaan, to be the example of the unbelief of the promise of entering into the rest into which Christ is entered, and the faith of that promise an example of the faith of this.

* Rom. ix. 5.

† Is. ix. 6. the Father of the age to come. Is. liii. 10. 11.

‡ Compare Heb. ix. 15. 18. 19. 20. Heb. xii. 24. 25. 26.

SECT. III. *The faith of the temporal promise a pattern of saving faith; and a notable mistake on this head obviated.*

HERE, by the way, we may take notice of a remarkable mistake that some go upon, who would infer from this passage, that the gospel is no more but an absolute promise, which every hearer of the gospel is bound to believe for himself, that it shall most certainly be performed to him; and if he believes not this, he perishes after the example of Israel in the wilderness, who fell short of the promised rest by their disbelieving that they should enter into it, and so knew God's breach of promise. This must have a fair appearance to them who do not consider the state of the case, with the Israelites who fell in the wilderness, as it stands in these particulars.

1st, They had the promise of rest in the covenant that God made with them, when he took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; and this covenant was a type of the new covenant, wherein we now have the promise of entering into his rest; as the apostle signifies in this epistle to the Hebrews, where he points out that transaction at Sinai, both as a testament, wherein an inheritance was bequeathed to the children of Israel, (for, through their fleshly relation to Christ, that seed in their loins, they were the children of God according to the flesh, and through him they inherited the earthly rest, the temporal inheritance *), and as a covenant, having a mediator, and ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. In both respects, he makes it a figure of the New Testament, wherein the eternal inheritance is bequeathed, or of the new covenant, whereof Christ, the antitype of Moses, is Mediator, standing for the people to God †, and likewise for God to the people, and which is ratified by the blood of his sacrifice. The apostle expressly points out laws to us in the new covenant, as well as in the old, which was the figure of it. For as in the first covenant he wrote his laws on tables of stone, when he said, *O that there were such a heart in them*; so in the new covenant, he writes his laws on the hearts of his people. Therefore the new covenant has laws, as well as the figure

* Gal. iii. 16.

† Heb. viii. & ix.

of it; and as the Israelites had laws delivered to them, when they were evangelised in a figure, so have we when we are truly evangelised: and if the gospel and testament or covenant of the Israelites in the wilderness was not a mere absolute promise, without any laws, or method and tenor, according to which they were to enjoy that promise, neither is our gospel and testament or covenant.

2dly, God's promise of rest to the nation of Israel, the promise made to their fathers in Christ, was absolute, and most certainly to be performed at all events to that nation: for it could not be disannulled by the law, which was given four hundred and thirty years after it was confirmed by God to Christ the seed *. But this promise was not absolute, to every Israelite, nor to all that generation that God brought out of Egypt; but to be performed to them, according to the tenor of the covenant that God made with them for the performance of the promise to the nation, or to the seed in the loins of that nation. So that they were bound indeed to believe, that God would bring the nation into that rest, according to the promise made to Abraham and to his seed; and that they themselves should come into that rest, according to the tenor of the covenant wherein they had that promise; but they were not bound to believe, every man for himself, that he should come into that rest, whether he followed the Lord according to the covenant or not.

This every gospel-hearer is bound to believe, and every gospel-professor professes this faith, that Jesus the Son of God hath finished his work, and is entered into his rest, and that all his heavenly nation, redeemed by him out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation, without difference, shall most certainly enter into that rest with him; and that they themselves must enter into that rest, only according to the tenor of the covenant made with that redeemed nation; but they are not called to believe, every one for himself, that he shall certainly, at any rate, enter into that rest: for he must labour to enter into that rest, lest he fall after the example of Israel's unbelief; he must give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, in the method prescribed in the new covenant; even in the way of keeping his commandments, or *believing in the name of his Son, and loving one another, as he gave us*

* Gal. iii. 15. 16. & 17.

commandment, fearing, lest a promise being left to the redeemed nation of entering into his rest, any of us, who by the gospel-profession belong to that nation, should seem to come short of it. And thus it is false, that every gospel-professor, let be every one that hears the gospel, is bound to believe for himself, that he shall certainly enter into that rest.

3dly, The Israelites fell in the wilderness, by their unbelief of God's promise of rest to the nation, and not by the unbelief of any absolute promise, that every individual of them that came out of Egypt should enter into that rest. For as there was never any such promise made, we see by the description of their unbelief, it respected the promise to the nation. The passage, to which the apostle refers, is in the 14th chapter of Numbers, where we find that upon hearing the report of the men that said, *The land eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people we saw in it, were men of great stature; — and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were we in their sight; — and we be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we* *: upon hearing this, they said, *Would God we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt*, ver. 2. 3. & 4. Thus they professed their unbelief of the promise of rest in that land to the nation: for they said, "Why hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should be a prey?" And thus, instead of fearing lest they should come short of the rest promised to the nation through their unbelief, they feared to the height of despair, that the whole nation should be cut off from possessing that land; and their unbelief, working thus, led them to turn away from the promised rest, and from following the Lord, to return again into Egypt, from whence the Lord had brought them. And they hardened themselves in this unbelief, against the exhortations of Joshua and Caleb, who were persuading them, not to fear the people of the land, nor rebel against the Lord, but to consider his goodness and power to perform his faithful

* Numb. xiii. 30.—33.

promise even to them, if they rebelled not against him: for they bade stone them with stones who thus exhorted them, and dissuaded them from their unbelief and disobedience, ver. 6.—10.

This was a lively emblem of total apostasy from the profession of the gospel through unbelief, or of departing from the living God through an evil heart of unbelief. And so the apostle sets it before these Hebrews, who were in hazard of falling away from the gospel-profession, and from the Christian institutions of worship, wherein they were engaged in the assembling of themselves together *, and from the love and good works required in the new covenant to assure them in the hope of entering into Christ's rest †. And so they were in hazard of returning back to Judaism, through the unbelieving fear of the much tribulation through which it behoved them to follow Christ unto that rest. He seems to refer to the exhortation of Joshua and Caleb, when he says to the Hebrews, ver. 12. 13. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called, To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* And thus he is very far from persuading every one of these Hebrews, who had been brought to the confident profession of the faith of the gospel, being illuminated and made partakers of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; he is very far from persuading every one of them to believe for himself an absolute promise, that he should certainly enter into Christ's rest.

4thly, Notwithstanding the unbelief of those who fell in the wilderness, the Lord performed all the promise that he called them to believe he would certainly perform. He brought the nation into that rest, while they were cut off from it who gave up with the promised rest, and with the covenant, wherein they had the promise of that rest, through their unbelief; so the Lord in no wise failed of his promise, but they failed of any part they could claim in it, by virtue of the covenant, through their own unbelief; and thus they knew his breach of promise. *As ye have spoken in mine ears, says he, so will I do unto you. — Doubtless ye shall not come into the land which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb and Joshua. — But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and*

* Heb. x. 22.—26.

† Heb. x. 23. 24. & vi. 10. 11.

they

they shall know the land which ye have despised. — And ye shall know my breach of promise, ver. 28.—35. The apostle points to this when he says, “Some when they heard, did provoke; howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by “Moses,” chap. iii. 16. and, “Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they who were “first evangelised, entered not in because of unbelief,” chap. iv. 6. His application of this to the Hebrews, whom he is exhorting to persevere in the gospel-profession, is manifest.

SECT. IV. *Why the seventh day continued to Israel, and why afterward set aside.*

WE need not forget by this digression, that the law of Moses, which enjoined the seventh day as the sabbath, was not only a representation of the law of works which Adam broke, but likewise at the same time a type, figure, or pattern of the new covenant. And so the seventh day, enjoined in the law, was not only a sign between Jehovah and Israel, that he made the world in six days, and rested the seventh; but it was likewise appointed in that law, on account of his working to bring them out of the bondage of Egypt into rest, which was the type of the work of redemption by Jesus Christ, and of the rest into which he is entered. So we find it said in the repetition of the law, in Deut. v. 15. *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.* And thus the rest of the seventh day was a type of the rest of Jesus Christ; therefore the apostle classes it with the other holy-days, and the new moons, and the distinction of meats appointed in the law of Moses, and makes it, together with them, the shadow of things to come, of which shadow the things of Christ are the body; and he declares that shadow to be done away by the death of Christ, when he says, Col. ii. 14. 16. 17. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. — Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath; which are a shadow of things to come; but*
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the body is of Christ. Yea the apostle makes God's resting the seventh day from his works of creation, a figure of Christ's resting from his works, when he says, "For he that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God from his own." And we need not be surprised with this, when we find the work of our redemption and recovery by Christ, and the restoration of all things by him, called so frequently *creation* *, and Adam called *the figure of him who was to come.*

This may serve to let us see, that when man had broke the rest of the seventh day, that same day was very proper to be continued as the sabbath among them who had the revelation of a new rest, till the true rest should come. It may likewise serve as a reason for the setting aside of the seventh day, and putting another day in the place of it, when that other rest is come; even the day on which he who is entered into his rest, rested from his own works, even as God from his works.

SECT. V. *The society of the three divine persons pointed out in bringing Israel to rest.*

IN the works that God wrought to give rest to Israel, we may again observe the society of the three divine persons, the Elohim of Israel, who appeared in an extraordinary manner among them with visible glory. The prophet Isaiah mentions the society of the three divine persons in the work of causing Israel to rest, chap. lxiii. 9. *The angel of his presence † saved them.* Ver. 10. *But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.* Ver. 11. *Where is he*

* Rom. v. 14.

† Heb. The angel or messenger, his face. And this is the person of whom it is said, Mal. iii. 1. "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger or angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in." There John Baptist is called God's messenger or angel also: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way to my face." For John was a man sent from God; "he was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light." There is a reference to this name *angel* in what the New Testament speaks of Christ as the sent of the Father; and when the New Testament calls him *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, we thereby know him to be the angel, his face. This distinguisheth him from all other messengers, as he is also by the errand on which he was sent

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that brought them up out of the sea? — Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? Ver. 14. *As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.*

The Son of God asserts his concurrence with the Father in his works, John v. 17. where he says, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; so we find this divine person appearing, in a special manner, in the working to bring Israel to rest, wherein he demonstrated himself to be the creator of the world, and at the same foreshewed his coming in the flesh, in the fulness of time, as the sent of the Father, to work the true redemption, and bring about the true rest. He appeared in that typical work, working in the Father's name; and his spirit was with him. This is that angel of the Lord that appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the bush, and said, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. — I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt; — and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land flowing with milk and honey*." And this is the person that appeared to Joshua in human likeness, (foreshewing his incarnation), as the captain of the host, when he was bringing Israel into that rest, Josh. v. 13. 14. 15. The apostle, with a reference to that passage, calls him the *Captain of the salvation of the many sons who are brought to glory by him*, Heb. ii. 10.

When, after the making of the golden calf, the "Lord said to Moses, Depart, go up hence, thou and the people, — unto the land which I sware to Abraham, — Unto thy seed will I give it: and I will send an angel before thee, — for I will not go up in the midst of thee." And when all the people mourned at these evil tidings, Exod. xxxiii. 1.—6. Moses makes intercession thus, ver. 12. 13. "Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. — Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, and I shall know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight." What Moses here means by God's way, may be understood by what Wisdom says,

* Exod. iii. 2.—10.

Prov. viii. 22. "The Lord possessed me, the beginning *,
" his way, before his works from thence;" and by what
Jesus said to his disciples, John xiv. 1.—6. where he tells
them of his going away to prepare a place for them, and
of his coming again to receive them unto himself; and he
says, "Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know."
"Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither
" thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith
" unto him, I am the way." Here our Lord, speaking
to his disciples of the true rest, manifestly refers to what
Moses speaks of the way with respect to the typical rest,
and affirms himself to be that way.

The words of Moses plainly signify that, by God's way,
he means a person by whom they should be brought into
the promised rest, and without whom their going towards
it, would be as going without a way, yea, and without
whom they could neither know God nor find grace in his
sight. For he says, "Thou hast not let me know whom
" thou wilt send with me. — Now therefore, I pray thee,
" shew me now thy way." The Lord's answer to him,
compared with John xiv. 7. 8. 9. makes this still clearer. He
says, "My face shall go, and I will give thee rest." And
Moses replies, "If thy face be not going, make us not go
" up from hence; for wherein shall it be known here, that
" I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it
" not in that thou goest with us? ver. 14. 15. 16.

The words of Jesus, pointing to this passage, lay it fully
open, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man
" cometh to the Father but by me. If ye had known me,
" ye should have known my Father also: and from hence-
" forth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith un-
" to him, Lord, Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
" — Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time
" with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He
" that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest
" thou, Shew us the Father? Believeest thou not that I am
" in the Father, and the Father in me?" Thus he is God's
face, by whom we know God; for his glory shines in the
face of Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his glory.
This is that divine person that appeared and spoke to the
fathers, and to Moses, and the people of Israel, when he

* There is no foundation in the Hebrew for *in* before *the begin-
ning*; and there is no necessity for *of* before *his way*.

brought them out of Egypt into the land of Canaan, and who settled there, and appeared, and spoke from between the cherubim. For they neither heard the Father's voice at any time, nor saw his shape, John v. 37.

Thus we may see, that as this divine person, the Son, or the Wisdom and the Word of God, was the Father's way to rest in the works of creation; so this same person was his way to rest, when he was working to bring Israel into his typical rest. And as they adhered to him who was going before them in the wilderness, and rested between the cherubim in the promised land, in opposition to the gods of the nations, they had rest in that land; but in departing from him, they lost the rest, and the way to it. So likewise, with respect to the true rest, he is the Father's way to his rest, and he is our way to that rest: for no man cometh to the Father but by him.

The THIRD REST.

CHAP. I. *Of the works by which that rest is procured.*

SECT. I. *These are works fulfilling the law.*

AS man's disobedience deprived him of rest with God, and brought the curse upon him, there could be no more rest for him with God, without the fulfilling of the broken law, which was impossible for him. But God revealed his design of bringing sinners to rest with him again, through the fulfilling of the law by the seed that was promised; and in pursuance of this design, he gave the law to the nation of which that seed was to come, saying, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* Whatever rest then that nation might have in Canaan's land, no man of that nation could reasonably expect true rest with God, but by the fulfilling of that law, which the promises gave them ground to expect would be done in due time by that seed of Abraham in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed. And as we lost our rest, and were condemned to death by the disobedience of Adam, as our head and representative before God, that promised seed was to
fulfil

fulfil the law as a public person, a head to those who should be received and brought to rest; otherwise no sinner could look for rest by his fulfilling of the law. This was pointed out to Israel in the sacrifices which were offered for a favour of rest to the Lord; and it is expressly declared by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxvi. 12. *Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works for us* *. These are the works that Jesus Christ wrought for us or to us, when he fulfilled the law, and redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us; and when he reconciled us to God, being made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and when he suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

SECT. II. *The works procuring rest are divine works.*

THE works that give us rest with God, must be his works: for his rest is his ceasing from his works, and we rest with him. Thus it was in the first rest, thus it was also in the typical rest; and so it must be therefore in the true, whereof both these were figures. But those works that were necessary to bring sinners to rest with God, could not be done by God without his becoming man, and being made under the law to fulfil it; or without his being made of a woman, and taking on him the seed of Abraham, according to the prophecies. Therefore that divine person, who was the Father's way to rest in the works of creation, and who was daily his delight, and who appeared to Moses as God's way to his rest, in his working to bring Israel into his rest, and as the angel his face, in whom his name is, did, in the fulness of time set in the prophecies, condescend to be sent forth from the Father, made of a woman, made under the law†; and though he was in the form of God, took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death

* There is no foundation in the Hebrew for the translation *in us*; for literally it is, *to us*: and there is no reason why the same word should be rendered *for us* in the first part of the verse, and *in us* in the last.

† Gal. iv. 4.

of the cross *. Thus he took hold of the seed of Abraham; and because the children (that the Father had given him to bring them to rest) were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage †.

By this taking part with the children in flesh and blood, there was a foundation laid for their union with God, and partaking with the society of the divine Three, in the works which he wrought, and in the rest brought in by them ‡. And hereby all the works of the man Christ Jesus, the whole obedience and sufferings in the fulfilling of the law, were his works, the works of no other person but him, who was from eternity with the Father, and by whom all things were made, and all those mighty works were wrought in bringing Israel out of Egypt into the promised rest: for this is he who says, *This is my body broken for you, my blood shed for you, and my soul is exceeding sorrowful* ||.

While he was doing the works that he came to finish in the human soul and body which he took to himself, and was found in fashion as a man, he demonstrated himself to be that divine person, that Word or Son of God, by the miracles he wrought **, and by his answering to the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah ††, who was pointed out in these, as Immanuel, God with us ‡‡; as the Lord God, the good Shepherd ||||; as David's Lord and his son †. And when he had put this truth of his upon this issue, that he should rise again from the dead the third day, according to the scriptures +, and the Jews, the enemies of this truth, had condemned him as a blasphemer, because he made himself the Son of God ++; his resurrection from the dead did solemnly reverse their sentence, and demonstrated the truth for which he died. But when he died for our sins, according to the scriptures, his resurrection declared him especially to be the Son of God,

* Phil. ii. 6. 7. 8. † Heb. ii. ‡ John xvii. 5. 20. 21. 22. 23.
 || Matth. xxvi. 26. 28. 38. ** John v. 17. †† Matth. xi. 2.—6.
 with Is. xxxv. 4. 5. 6. ‡‡ Is. vii. 14. with Matth. i. 22. 23.
 |||| Is. xl. 10. 11. with John x. † Psal. cx. 1. with Matth. xxii.
 41.—46. + Matth. xxvii. 63. 64. I Cor. xv. 4. 10. with
 Hos. vi. 2. ++ John xix. 7. Matth. xxvi. 63.—66.

as having finished the work of fulfilling the broken law, and satisfying the offended divine Majesty, which none but a person of infinite worth could do. Thus, when he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, his resurrection declared him, that was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, to be the Son of God with power *; and shewed him to be God over all, blessed for ever †, and justified him as God that was manifest in the flesh ‡.

CHAP. II. *Divine glory appearing in these works.*

SECT. I. *The glory of divine mercy.*

WE may observe the brightest display of the divine glory in the works that he finished when he fulfilled the law, such as was not in the works of the six days, nor in any other divine work. The works from which Jesus Christ rested, declare him to be indeed the face of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and shew us that his name is in him. The glory of the divine mercy, love, and grace is fully manifested by him who hath finished his work, and is entered into his rest. This was remarkable in the proclamation of the Lord's name to Moses, when he promised that his face should go and give him rest ||, *The Lord God merciful and gracious, &c.* For "hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us **." God is love: in this was manifested the love of God towards us; because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins ††." The sovereignty and independency of the divine mercy and grace shines awfully in the substitution of the Son of God in the room of sinners, to fulfil the law for them, and in the choice of those sinners, for whose sins his soul was made an offering, and who are redeemed by his blood out of every nation. The riches of the divine

* Rom. i. 3. 4.

† Rom. ix. 5.

‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

|| Exod. xxxiv. 6. 7.

** 1 John iii. 16.

†† 1 John iv. 8. 9. 10.

glory will be made known on God's people, for whom Christ was smitten, even the vessels of mercy, whom he hath afore prepared unto glory, according to what he said to Moses when he promised to go and give him rest; "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*."

SECT. II. *Divine justice.*

THE works that he finished who is entered into his rest, do at the same time display the glory of the divine justice, and his judgment against sin. His vindictive justice, as it is called, is nothing else but the infinite opposition of the divine nature (which is goodness and love) unto sin, which is the transgression of the law, that requires conformity to the divine goodness, or that requires love. This infinite opposition of the divine goodness unto wickedness, is expressed in his judgment against sin, or in the curse of the law; and is called his wrath, which he will shew eternally on the vessels of wrath; because it cannot be fully manifested upon them, in any limited time, or any time short of infinite, as it could be in the death of that person of infinite dignity and worth, who himself bare his people's sins on his own body on the tree †, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his justice, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ‡. Thus the pardoning grace of God could not be manifested, without the declaration of the infinite opposition of God's goodness to sin, or of his justice. It behoved his judgment against sin to be executed according to the proclamation of his name to Moses, "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, || and that will by no means clear the guilty**." And this could never be but by the substitution of Jesus Christ the Son of God in the room of those who were to be pardoned, that he might die for them; as is darkly and

* Exod xxxiii. 19. with Rom. ix. † 1 Pet. ii. 2.

‡ Rom. iii. 24. 25. 26.

|| Heb. and clearing will not clear.

** Exod. xxxiv. 7.

in a figure intimated to Moses in that proclamation of God's name, *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children*. When the the Jews afterwards complained of this as unequal, saying, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge*, the Lord signifies to them, that, if they counted this unequal, every man should die for his own sins, and live by his own righteousness*. But in that case not one of them could be saved: for "curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" and, "The man that doth these things, shall live in them." But by the making of that promised seed under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, God's pardoning mercy and justice are gloriously displayed together; whereas all apprehensions of the goodness of God, without his justice or infinite opposition to all sin, are of the same kind with that doctrine which our first parents learned from the serpent, when they were turned away from beholding that goodness of God, with adoration and thankfulness. They believed the serpent, saying, *Ye shall not surely die* †; and so do their posterity, shutting their eyes against the glory of the divine mercy and justice displayed in Jesus Christ ‡.

SECT. III. *Divine wisdom.*

THE glory of the divine wisdom shines in the contrivance of the way of bringing sinners to rest with God, by the works that the Son of God hath finished. The making of the opposition of the divine nature to sin, and all the divine glory to shine brightly by the entrance of sin into the world, the displaying of the brightest glory of the divine goodness by the misery that follows sin ||, the pardoning of sin, and justifying the sinner through the punishing of sin, and the full execution of God's judgment against it, the magnifying of the law and making it infinitely honourable, in the salvation of the breakers of the law, and the glorifying of God in giving eternal life to them that had dishonoured him, and come short of his glory: all these display the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, to the eternal admiration of the

* Ezek. xviii. † Gen. iii. 4. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4.

|| Rom. ix. 23. & xi. 30.—36.

redeemed,

redeemed, and of all the innumerable company of angels. But the psalmist, when celebrating the glory of the divine mercy and truth, in his song for the sabbath-day, says, "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not: neither doth a fool understand this *." Yet such brutish men and fools are many of the wise men, the scribes, and the disputers of this world, from whom God hath hid these things, which he hath revealed unto babes †.

SECT. IV. *Divine veracity.*

THE glory of God's truth and faithfulness is manifested in Jesus Christ, who hath finished his works, and is entered into his rest. The truth of the threatening of the law, "Curfed is every one that continueth not in all things," is manifested in his redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; and likewise of the promise, in giving us life in him who did these things †. The truth of God, in the institution of the figures and types of the Old Testament, and especially the sacrifices, is also manifest in the death and resurrection of Christ, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; as the apostle shews at large in this epistle to the Hebrews. In the sufferings of Christ with the following glory, we behold the truth and faithfulness of God in all the promises and prophecies of the || Old Testament; and therein we have also a certain pledge of the fulfilment of the prophecies of the New: for in him all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen **.

SECT. V. *Divine power.*

Moreover, the glory of the divine power and all-sufficiency is marvellously manifested in Jesus Christ, in the finishing of his works, and his entrance into his rest. The uniting of the human nature with the divine, in the person of the Word or Son of God, the sending of him

* Pſal. xcii. 5. 6. † Matth. xi. 25. 1 Cor. ii. 7. 8. 9. 10.

‡ Gal. iii. 12. 13. 14. || 1 Pet. i. 9. 10. 11. 12.

** 2 Cor. i. 18. & 20.

forth, made of a woman, a virgin, in the likeness of sinful flesh without sin, and so made under the law, is the new thing the Lord hath created in the earth *, like unto which there is nothing in the height above, or in the depths below †. Therefore, when the angel came to Mary with the account of it, he concludes his message thus: “For with God nothing shall be impossible ‡.” The doing of the *impossible* of the law ||, the upholding of the man Christ Jesus in bearing the curse of the law on his soul **, and the destroying of him through death who had the power of death, with the triumph over him as the prince of this world, and the destruction of his works by the cross ††, whereby the curse, the strength of sin, which is the sting of death, was done away; all these manifest the greatness of God’s saving strength in a wonderful manner ‡‡ to them who believe, who, however it may appear to others, look on the cross of Christ as the power of God to salvation ||||.

See how the apostle speaks of the display of the divine power in the raising of Jesus from the death that he underwent, to the right hand of the Father, and setting him over all things to his church his body, or in bringing him into his rest. He says, Eph. i. 18. 19. &c. “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know — what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the might of his power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” &c. This work of divine power exceeds the work of the six days; and the works of God in bringing Israel out of Egypt into his rest in Canaan, with a strong hand and an out-stretched arm, were no more but a figure of the working of his power toward them that believe, as it wrought in Jesus Christ, when he finished his work and entered into his rest. For this is the exceeding greatness of his power, and the working of the might of his power: but our understanding must be enlightened to believe it, as also to behold all the divine glory displayed in the works finished by Christ, and

* Jer. xxxi. 22. † If. vii. 11. 14. ‡ Luke i. 30.—37.

|| Rom. viii. 3. ** If. xlii. 1. & l. 2.—7.

†† Heb. ii. 14. 15. † John iii. 8. Col. ii. 15.

‡‡ If. lxiii. 1.—6. ||| 1 Cor. i. 23. 24. Rom. i. 16.

in his entering into his rest; otherwise we cannot have rest with God in beholding his glory, manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. But so far as our understandings are truly enlightened to behold the divine glory that shines in him, who hath ceased from his works, and entered into his rest, we shall perceive the exceeding greatness of this rest, above the two foregoing, and be brought into fellowship with God in his rest.

CHAP. III. *Of the society of the three divine persons in Jesus Christ, the works which he finished, and the rest into which he is entered.*

THIS was notified to John Baptist at the baptizing of Jesus, when he was about to be manifested to Israel, and to enter on his public ministry. For then all the three appeared standing to their mutual engagements to one another, and as it were ratifying them. Jesus was baptized professing his engagements for his people to fulfil all righteousness; and when he was baptized, “Lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased *.” John saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God †. Unto this passage, and John’s testimony upon it, Jesus referred the Jews, when they asked him, “By what authority dost thou these things? and who gave thee this authority ‡?” and when they persecuted him for saying, “that God was his Father, making himself equal with God,” John v. 17. 18. 32.—38.

SECT. I. *The divine Three manifest in the incarnation.*

THE society of the three divine persons may be viewed, first, in the work of making that divine person the son of a woman, and making him under the law.

His work here was his taking on him that seed of David, that seed of Abraham that was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, or his taking hold of it. For thus the

* Matth. iii. 13.—17. † John i. 29.—34.

‡ Matth. xxi. 23.—27.

Greek text, Heb. ii. 16. is best rendered, "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." He took hold of that holy thing, that human soul and body in the womb of the virgin, so that it was his soul and his body, his flesh and blood, as verily as that of the children whom the Father had given him, is theirs. "For as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same *." This HE who was in the form of God, took the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man †. He who was with the Father came to be with us ‡, came forth from the Father, and came into the world ||. This is that which was foretold to the fathers of the Old Testament, in his appearance to them in human likeness.

Now, when the Son of God took hold of the seed of Abraham, and so made that soul and body, that holy thing which was born of the virgin, his own soul and his own body, his own flesh and blood, then that holy thing was the Son of God **. And by partaking of flesh and blood with those who were joined with him in the promises, in opposition to the seed of the serpent, even those of all nations without difference, who were to be blessed in him according to Abraham's promise, he became their brother, and so they became the children of God, being the brethren of his Son, who took part with them in flesh and blood ††. This flesh and blood became holy or separate to God, in the most peculiar and highest manner wherein any thing could possibly be so, by becoming the flesh and blood of the Son of God; and this is the foundation of the sanctification of all those with whom he became partaker of flesh and blood, by taking hold of that seed of Abraham. For thereby they are separated unto God, as the apostle says. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." And this flesh and blood became fit to destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them. This seed of Abraham was able to bless the nations that were under the curse, when he took hold of it, and made it actually his own.

* Heb. ii. 14. † Phil. ii. 6. 7.

‡ John i. 1. 2. 14. Matth. i. 23.

|| John xvi. 27. 28. Gal. iv. 4.

** Luke i. 35. †† Heb. ii. 10.—17.

The Father's part in this work of making his Son of a woman, and under the law, is expressed by *sending him forth* *, and *sending him into the world* †. Jesus Christ called men to believe this of him, and his disciples professed this, that he was sent of the Father ‡. And in this we are called especially to behold the Father's love. "God is love," (says the apostle). "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins." Yea, with respect to this, Jesus Christ is called *The Son of his love* ||. When the Father sent forth his Son taking hold of the seed of Abraham, he thereby separated that flesh and blood whereof his Son took hold, unto his glory; and so the Father sanctified that which was born of the virgin. Therefore the fruit of David's loins, whereof the Son of God took hold, is called *the Father's holy One*, where it is said, "Thou wilt not suffer thy holy One to see corruption **." Thus the Father set apart that fruit of the virgin's womb unto his own glory, or sanctified it by sending forth his Son made of the woman. And so the sanctification of those with whom he sent his Son to partake in flesh and blood, is owing unto him as the Father, as well as unto the Son whom he sent.

This expression, whereby the Father's part in this work is pointed out, is taken from those passages in the Old Testament, where the Son of God is called *the angel*, or *messenger*, or *the sent* ††, appearing in human likeness, or otherwise foreshewing his incarnation, shewing himself to be the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and receiving worship from his people; as when he appeared to Moses in the bush, and spake to him in the mount Sinai ††. For as his appearing in human likeness foreshewed his taking hold of the seed of Abraham, so his appearing as the angel, that is, the messenger or the sent of the Father, foreshewed the

* Gal. iv. 4.

† John iii. 16. 17. & x. 36. 1 John iv. 8. 9. 10.

‡ John xvii. 8. & 1 John iv. 14. 15. || Col. i. 13.

** Psal. xvi. 10. Acts ii. 25.—31. & x. 35. 36. 37.

†† Gen. xlviii. 16. Hos. xii. 4. 10. with Gen. xxxii. 26.—30. & xxii. 11. 15. Exod. xxiii. 20.—23.

‡‡ Acts vii. 30. 38.

Father's sending him forth in the fulness of time, made of a woman. And it was no more unsuitable to become a messenger than to become a man. But his being sent forth made of a woman, according to the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, distinguishes him sufficiently from all those creatures that are called *angels*. For, in being sent forth, he took not hold of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham.

This sending him forth from the Father manifests him to be the Son of God, who rejoiced before his Father in the making of the world, and was daily his delight. It shews him to be the face of God *, or "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, the heir of all things" that the Father hath, who was sent to bring Israel into his rest, in whom God's name was, and who proved himself to be the only true God, the maker of heaven and earth, and was worshipped by Israel as God, even as Jehovah, who alone led them, and there was no strange god with him, while they were forbidden to have any other gods beside him, and commanded to worship the Lord their God, and to serve him only. Yea when he bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him*. He was sent forth to be the God and King of that church, *where the angels are all but ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation*†. Thus, by his being sent forth from the Father, taking hold of the seed of Abraham, he is as far distinguished from these ministering spirits, as the Creator is from the creature, as the object of worship is from the worshippers, and as the God and the King of the church of the first born is from the servants of that church.

The part of the Holy Ghost, in the work of making the Son of God of a woman, was the exertion of the might of his divine power, in the conception of that seed in the womb of the virgin, making her womb fruitful, and making that seed of Abraham whereof the Son took hold, perfectly pure, and free from spot and stain of sin, or holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Thus he concurred in making that which was born of the virgin holy,

* Peniel, Gen. xxxii. 30. Numb. xii. 8.

† Heb. chap. i. throughout,

and so laid the foundation of his work of sanctification upon all them with whom the Son of God became a partaker in flesh and blood, when he took hold of the seed of Abraham. And his power, that wrought in the performance of that promise of the seed of Abraham, is the same that works in the regeneration of all the children of God. The Spirit of God was at work in the preparation of the typical tabernacle of God *; and when the glory of the Lord (the *Schechinah* or glorious light, the emblem of the Son of God that shined between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat) came to take possession of it as his own house, then a cloud (wherein the action of the air, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost, is most visible) covered † the tabernacle. So it was likewise when the glory of the Lord was taking possession of his temple built by Solomon ‡. With a manifest reference unto this, the angel says to Mary, Luke i. 35. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, “and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; “therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, “shall be called *the Son of God*.” Because then the Word was made flesh, and came to tabernacle among us, of whom it is said, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only “begotten of the Father ||.” And then the brightness of his Father’s glory, the angel his face, the angel of the covenant, was coming into the temple of his body **. Therefore the power of the Highest overshadowed it, as the cloud covered the tabernacle, so as Moses was not able to enter it; and the temple, so as the priests could not stand to minister, when the glory of the Lord took possession of his house. And as it is said, the priests could not stand because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord ††; so says the angel to Mary, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing born, shall be called the Son of God*.

* Exod. xxxi. 3. † Exod. xl. 34. 35. Numb. ix. 15.

‡ 1 Kings viii. 10. 11. || John i. 14.

** John ii. 19. 20. 21.

†† 1 Kings viii. 25. 26. 27. with 2 Chron. vi. 16. 17. 18. But will God truly dwell on the earth? or, Will God truly inhabit man on the earth?

SECT. II. *The divine Three manifest in Christ's works.*

WE shall next view the society of the three divine persons in the works that the Son of God did, when he was sent forth made of a woman, made under the law to fulfil it, and especially in the finishing of those works in his death; for, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

The works which Jesus the son of Abraham did and finished in his death, were the works of the Son of God, who himself took hold of the seed of Abraham; so that this son of Abraham was no other person but the Son of God. This made all his works in the fulfilling of the law of infinite value, as being the works of a person of infinite dignity and worth, "who his own self bare our sins" in his own body on the tree *, and "who purged our sins by himself †." The blood of Christ, who gave himself an offering and a sacrifice for them with whom he partook in flesh and blood, is an infinite atonement for them, an infinite price paid for the redemption of these his brethren, and able to make them perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as they believe it to be the blood of God ‡. There is an infinite merit in his obedience to the death, who was in the form of God: and this is the merit of his brethren who receive the adoption of sons, through the Son of God his being made under the law for them ||, and who are made the righteousness of God in him, who knew no sin, and was made sin for them. Therefore they worship him, ascribing all worthiness unto him, and renounce all worthiness but that which is in his blood, when they say, "Thou art worthy — for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation **." As none can learn this song but they who are redeemed from the earth ††, so this only makes them more valuable and worthy than the nations out of which they are redeemed, that God purchased them with his own blood.

As the infinite dignity and worth of the Godhead is set

* 1 Pet. ii. 24.

† Heb. i. 3.

‡ Acts xx. 28.

|| Gal. iv. 4. 5.

** Rev. v. 8. 9.

†† Rev. xiv. 3.

before us in the person of the Son, by the works that he finished in his death; so the infinite Majesty of the same God is brought to our view, in the person of the Father, by those works which he gave his Son to finish *, when he sent him forth made of a woman, made under the law. For thus the Son became his servant †, and all his works the works of obedience to the Father. So he gave himself for his brethren an offering and a sacrifice to God the Father for a sweet-smelling savour ‡. He offered up himself to God ||. He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard for his fear or obedience. “Though he was the Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered **.” And as it was said with respect unto the works of creation, that the Son was daily the Father’s delight; so now when he was working the works that the Father gave him to do, and doing his will before him, in the form of a servant, the Father was infinitely pleased in all that he did, because it was the work of his “Son: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

Thus the Father was “in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ††.”

And the Holy Ghost, by whose power Jesus Christ was conceived in the virgin’s womb, and born of her without spot of sin, abode upon that holy thing which she brought forth, and whereof the Son of God took hold ‡‡. Even as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle, so did he abide upon the human nature of the Son of God; upon his soul to furnish and strengthen him there for the whole of his works in fulfilling the law, and to uphold him in suffering the curse for his people. So we find him filled with the Holy Ghost, and conducted by him in his human nature, when he was tempted of the devil |||. And as to his offering up

* John xvii. 4.

† If. xlii. 1. & liii. 11. Psal. xl. 6. 7. 8. with Heb. x. 5. 6. 7. 10.

‡ Eph. v. 2. || Heb. ix. 14. ** Heb. v. 7. 8.

†† 2 Cor. v. 19. 20. 21.

‡‡ If. xi. 1. 2. and lxi. 1. with Luke iv. 18. and Acts x. 38.

||| Luke iv. 1. 2.

of himself to God the Father without spot, it is said to be through the eternal Spirit *. For it was proper to the Holy Ghost, by whose power he was conceived and born without spot of sin, to make his obedience and sacrifice without spot or fault; as it was proper to the Son of God himself, to make his own spotless obedience and sacrifice of infinite value and worth before the Father, that he might have pleasure and find a favour of rest in it, who could not have pleasure or rest in any other sacrifice, but that which, by its infinite worth, was able to declare his infinite justice and holiness in the salvation of sinners.

Now, when the sufferings of the Son of God were at the highest, and when he was undergoing that death contained in the curse of the law, as the punishment of his people's sins, then his soul was in the highest exercise of the grace of the Holy Spirit, wherewith he was filled in a suitability to his condition; and his obedience kept pace with his sufferings in their utmost stretch, through the power of the Holy Ghost. For instance,

1. As he stedfastly persevered in the firm belief of the truth of the Father's word to him, under the thickest darkness of the hiding of his face from him †; so he held fast his own integrity and truth before him ‡, and no shadow of guile was found in him, when he found himself forsaken for his people's straying from God. And when all the deceit of the prince of darkness, and of wicked men, influenced by him, was exerted against him, then there was no guile found in his mouth ||.

2. His humility, meekness, and self-denial were most remarkable in the extremity of his sufferings. Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth **. The apostle points out to us the highest instance of self-denied obedience, in the account he gives of Christ's sacrifice, when speaking of him as a priest, and of his offering, Heb. v. 7. 8. where he speaks of his prayers in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto

* Heb. ix. 14.

† If i. 7.—10.; Psal. xxii. throughout.

‡ Psal. xviii. 22. 23.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 22. with If. liii. 9.

** If. liii. 7.

death *; and being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground †: and likewise on the cross, where he cried, with a loud voice, the first words of the 22d Psalm, and so made that psalm (which is a prayer for salvation from death) his own prayer. The apostle takes notice of the extremity of his sufferings, expressed in the prayers that he offered up to the Father; and he takes notice of the utmost obedience expressed in these prayers, which could not have appeared as it did but under such sufferings. He says, *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered.* He suffered the death threatened in the law, the terrible wrath of God contained in the curse of the law; and when his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death, the pains of hell got hold on him, and he found trouble and sorrow. He prayed for salvation from this death; and his prayer was, *If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done ‡.*

Here was the highest instance of self-denied submission and subjection to the will of the Father, or the most perfect obedience that could appear in the world. The offering up of these prayers (wherein his greatest sufferings and this wonderful obedience in them were expressed) was accepted; and he was heard; he was saved from that death; the cup passed from him, when he drank it, and because he drank it in self-denied obedience to the Father's will. He was heard in his prayers for salvation from death, because of his obedience in that death, and because it was the obedience of the Son. For it was not possible to save from that death without the declaration of the justice of God, which could not be made in salvation from death, but by the death of the Son of God himself, making intercession for the transgressors in bearing their sins ||; otherwise that cup had passed from him without his drinking it.

So here we learn the impossibility of salvation from death, but by the obedience of the Son of God unto death; and all prayers and supplications for it are utterly vain, without him who poured out his soul unto death, who was numbered with the transgressors, and who bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. But the

* Matth. xxvi. 37. 38.; Mark xiv. 33. 34.

† Luke xxii. 42. & 44.

‡ Matth. xxvi. 39. & 42.; John xviii. 11.

|| Is. liii. 12.

Father

Father was able to save him from death, who, though he were a Son, yet learned obedience by the things that he suffered; and so to save them for whom he obeyed and suffered.

3. His love appeared exceeding great in his obedience unto death; and love is the fulfilling of the law. His love to his Father was exceeding fervent, in the agony of his soul, when he found himself forsaken, and when the wrath due to his brethrens sins filled his soul; and he expressed his fervent love in his prayers, *My God, &c. and, Not as I will, but as thou wilt*; and, *If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done*. And these same prayers which he offered up, expressed his unspeakable love to his brethren, for whom he drank that cup, that they might be saved with him from that death. Yea, his love to his enemies was most manifest, when they were doing their utmost against him, *Father, says he, forgive them, for they know not what they do* *. And this prayer saved many who were chargeable with the guilt of crucifying him †, and who did it through ignorance ‡. Now, these three, truth, self-denial, and love, which appeared so remarkably in the obedience of Jesus Christ unto the death, when, through the eternal Spirit, he offered up himself without spot to God, are the chief things in the character of Jesus Christ, as it is drawn in the gospel, for the imitation of all them who look for salvation through his obedience to the death. And that same Spirit that wrought in him when he was offering up himself, works in them that are saved by him, to influence them in their obedience to him, especially in these three, whereby he and his brethren are opposed to the devil and his children, whose character is || deceit, pride, and enmity.

SECT. III. *The divine Three manifest in Christ's resting from his works.*

BUT it is time now to consider the society of the divine persons in Jesus his resting from his works, and entering into his rest.

Jesus says to the Jews, when speaking of himself as that

* Luke xxiii. 34. † Acts ii. 36.—41.

‡ Acts xvii. 19. with 1 Tim. i. 13. & Heb. vi. 3.—6

|| John viii. 44. 49. 50.; & 1 John.

Shepherd * of whom the prophets spake, John x. "I lay down my life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. None taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." No mere creature has power over his own life, to dispose of it at his pleasure, and none was capable to give his life a ransom for sinners. But when the Creator of all things, the living One, became a mortal man †, he had power to dispose of that life which he took to himself, and to give it a ransom for his sheep, and to lay it down as the price of the redemption of his brethren from death, with whom he took part in that life; and when he laid it down for them, he had power to take it again for them. For the infinite dignity of his person gave infinite merit to the laying down of his life, and made it a price of infinite value for the redemption of his sheep: and by virtue of this he rose again, because it was not possible that he should be holden of death ‡, who, having power to lay down his life, that he might take it again, gave full satisfaction to the law and justice of God by his death. Therefore the apostle tells us, "The Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, was brought again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant ||." The infinite merit of his blood caused his resurrection, and his entrance into rest; and so he ceased or rested from his own works, and entered into his rest, as the apostle says, (with reference to the high priest's entrance into the holiest with blood), "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption **."

The glorious rest into which Jesus Christ is entered, is the reward of the works that he finished in his death. Therefore he prays the Father thus: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ††." He was with the Father before the world

* Zech. xiii. 7.; Is. xl. 10. 11.; Ezek. xxxiv.; Micah ii. 12. 13.

† Rev. i. 17. 18.

‡ Acts ii. 24.

|| Heb. xiii. 20.

** Heb. ix. 12.

†† John xvii. 4. 5.

was, having all that glory which is now displayed in the work which he finished. He was infinitely happy with the Father from eternity in the enjoyment of the same infinite perfections; and to this his glory and happiness nothing could be added, nor could any thing be taken from it by any work. But his glory that he had with the Father, was not displayed in any work before the world: yea, when the work of the six days was finished, all the works that were very good, were not capable to make a complete manifestation of it. This could only be done by the work that the Father gave him to finish, who had that glory with him before the world. And when he took hold of the human nature, to finish therein the works which display that glory that he had with the Father before the world, he then prays the Father, that in that same nature wherein he finished the work, he may enjoy that glory which is manifested in the work he did in that nature; and thus he asks the rest as the reward of his working. In this reward he desires *, that those whom the Father had given him may be all sharers with him, and so have the closest and most intimate communion with God; much more intimate than that which Adam lost, for they enter into his rest.

As the Son of God had power to take again his life, and took it again, through the infinite merit of his obedience unto death; so he says, *This commandment have I received of my Father*. When he took the form of a servant, then, at the Father's commandment, he laid down his life; for he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, and, at the Father's commandment, he took it again. For, because he was obedient unto death, "therefore the Father highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow †, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Father found a favour of rest in Christ's sacrifice ‡, found a complete satisfaction to his justice, and the law magnified, and made honourable by the death of his Son: therefore he loosed the pains of death ||, and declared that he would not call their sins for

* John xvii. † Phil. ii. 6.—11. Compare Gen. xli. 43. 44.

‡ Gen. viii. 21. with Eph. v. 2. || Acts ii. 24.

whom Christ died, to remembrance again by any other sacrifice *.

Thus when the Son of God ceased from his works, at the Father's commandment, he was justified according to the law, that said, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.* And this his justification is the justification of all his brethren, for whose offences he was delivered; for he was raised again for their justification †. Therefore, says the apostle, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us ‡." And so Christ's resurrection is testified in the gospel, that we may partake of his justification and salvation from death, in believing the testimony, that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. So the apostle says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation ||."

The Father rested in the work that was finished by his Son, as it fully declared the glory of his love, in its infinite opposition unto sin; and so he rested in his love **, and was well pleased in the Son of his love. This satisfaction in the death of his Son, was expressed in his raising him from the dead, and giving him glory: "For, therefore," says Christ, "doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again ††." So he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father ‡‡. For that glory was fully expressed in the commandment, to him who finished his works, to cease from them, and enter into his rest.

The raising of Christ from the dead, which declared the Father's glory, and declared him to be the Son of God with power, is called *begetting him*. For thus says the apostle, when bearing witness of his resurrection, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was

* Heb. x. i. 18.

† Rom. viii. 33. 34.

** Zeph. iii. 17.

‡‡ Rom. vi. 4.

† Rom. iv. 24. 25.

|| Rom. x. 8. 9. 10.

†† John x. 17.

“ made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto
 “ us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again;
 “ as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my
 “ Son, this day have I begotten thee *.” With respect to
 this, Jesus Christ is called *the first-begotten of the dead* †,
and the first-born from the dead ‡. On account of this,
 the Father is called *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus*
Christ ||; and so he is the God and Father of all them ** who
 partake with him in his being begotten from the dead;
 even his brethren among whom he is the first born, who
 were predestinated to be conformed to him in his sufferings,
 and in the following glory ††. Therefore the apostle says,
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us
again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the dead, to an inheritance ††,” &c. And so at the same
 time of the manifestation ||| of the sons of God, when they
 shall be raised from the dead by virtue of Christ’s resurrec-
 tion, they will be the children of God, being the children
 of the resurrection †.

Because of the hope given us, in the raising of Jesus
 Christ from the dead, and giving him glory +, the Father
 is styled *the God of hope* ++. He is likewise called *the God*
of peace, with respect to his commandment, that brought
 again the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, from
 the dead =. For as he was, in giving him to the death,
 reconciling those of all nations of the world for whom he
 died, unto himself *; so when that reconciliation was
 wrought by his death, he declared himself reconciled, in
 the bringing again Jesus Christ from the dead. This is that
 peace which Jesus gave his disciples when he came again
 to them from the dead, and sent them forth as witnesses of
 his resurrection †. This peace is described, Eph. chap. ii.
 from ver. 14. to 17. where the testimony concerning the
 resurrection of the Lord Jesus is called *the preaching of*

* Acts xiii. 32. 33. Psal. ii. 7.

† Rev. i. 5.

‡ Col. i. 18.

|| 1 Pet. i. 3.

** John xx. 17.

†† Rom. viii. 17.—29.

‡‡ 1 Pet. i. 3.

||| Rom. viii. 19. 23.

‡ Luke xx. 36.

+ 1 Pet. i. 21.

++ Rom. xv. 13.

= Heb. xiii. 20. with John x. 18.

* 2 Cor. v. 19. 21. 11. liii. 5. & 6.

† John xx. 19. 20. 21.

peace. For the resurrection of Christ, witnessed by the apostles, manifests this peace unto all nations without difference, and carries in it God's solemn call to them to be reconciled to him; and they are reconciled to him in believing that testimony*. Thus in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, according to † the word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: he is Lord of all. The covenant of peace betwixt God, and his people of all nations without difference, was ratified by the death of Christ, by the blood of his sacrifice; and when this was done, the Father appeared as the God of peace, in bringing again the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of his sheep, from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant.

As Jesus Christ ceased from his works, and entered into his rest, by the infinite merit of his own works, and by the appointment of his Father, who was resting infinitely pleased in the works of his Son; so this was likewise by the power of the Holy Ghost ‡. It is the part of the Holy Ghost to declare Jesus Christ to be the Son of God with power: and he did this in his birth, and in the days of his flesh: for Jesus was then anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power ||. But he did it yet more abundantly, when he caused him to rest from his works, in his resurrection, and in glorifying him at the Father's right hand; where, when he received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost **, he had the highest manifestation of his being the Son of God, and was brought to full rest.

The Holy Ghost caused the Son of God to rest in his human nature, wherein he wrought his works. And first, he quickened him, and restored to him his life that he gave for his people, when he raised him from the dead, by the same power whereby he also quickens his people from trespasses and sins, wherein they were dead ††, and whereby he shall quicken their mortal bodies at the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

Thus Jesus Christ ceased or rested from that death where-

* 2 Cor. v. 18.—21. with Rom. x. 8.—17.

† Acts x. 35. 36. 40. 41. 42. 43. for the 36th verse is better joined to the 35th by the supplement *according to*, than to the 37th by the supplement, *I say*.

‡ Rom. i. 4. & viii. 10. 11. || Acts x. 38.

** Acts ii. 23. †† Eph. ii. 4. 5.

in his works were finished, and that by his own merit, by his Father's appointment, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; and thus the three divine persons had society in Jesus his ceasing from his works, when he rose from the dead. And his people are admitted to fellowship with the divine Three, by partaking with him, who was delivered for their offences, and raised for their justification: for because he lives, they shall live also *; and they are caused to rest from death with him, by the power of the Spirit that raised him from the dead.

But then the Holy Ghost caused Jesus Christ to rest further than in his resurrection, when he was set on the Father's right hand, as head over all things to his church, and as head of his body the church †. For then he received from God the Father, that promise of the Holy Ghost, which was the full reward of his obedience to the death, and whereby he was fully glorified ‡. The Holy Ghost, which he received from the Father, caused his soul to rest, in the nearest and fullest enjoyment of the divine glory, manifested by the works he finished in his death. And as his soul had been filled with a sense of the wrath due to his people's sins, when he was in an agony, and exceeding sorrowful even unto death; so now his soul was filled beyond measure with a joyful sense of his Father's love, and of his delight in the works that he finished.

Thus he was made most blessed for ever, he was made exceeding glad with the Father's countenance ||. No sooner was Jesus Christ anointed with this oil of gladness above his fellows, than he shed forth a portion of it upon the believers of his resurrection, who were assembled together, on the day of Pentecost, or feast of the first-fruits, which was on the morrow after the sabbath, the first day of the week **. When Christ's people first partook with him in the Holy Ghost, who caused him to rest, his coming on them was accompanied with divers signs, and miracles, and gifts, which are ceased, because the use of them is ceased: such was the mighty rushing wind, with the appearance of fiery tongues; the gift of tongues for the bearing witness of Christ's resurrection to all nations and languages by word

* John xiv. 19.

† Eph. i. 19.—23.

‡ Acts ii. 23. & iii. 13.

|| Psal. xxi. 4. 5. 6.

** Acts chap. ii. with Lev. xxiii. 16.

of mouth; the power, liberty and boldness of the chosen witnesses of Christ's resurrection in bearing witness of it *; and the divers signs, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby God bare them witness that they were sent of him, and were faithful in their testimony which he sent them to give †. For now their testimony is completed, and fully committed to writing in the books of the New Testament.

The Holy Ghost was given likewise for raising and maintaining a profession of the faith of the Son of God, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification ‡. So he gives men boldness, and freedom, and joy in the confession of the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory ||. Unto this belong all the ordinary gifts of the Spirit, that continue in the churches, and among the people of Christ, to the end of the world.

But this is not the chief thing in that promise of the Holy Ghost as a Comforter, which Jesus Christ left to all believers, keeping his commandments, and suffering for him on the earth. For many who are enlightened, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost in his gifts, do draw back to perdition **. But the promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to them who believe to the saving of the soul, and so keep Christ's commandments, especially that of brotherly love, abides with them, and makes them know that Christ is in his Father, and they in him, and he in them ††. "The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, witnesseth with their spirits, that they are the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be they suffer together, that they may be also glorified together." And he is in them as the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, "Abba, Father;" and makes intercession in them with unutterable groans, for the day of redemption, the time of the manifestation and glorious liberty of the children of God ‡‡; even as it was said of Christ in the prophecies, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father |||." And the apostle tells

* Acts iv. 31. 32.

† Heb. ii. 3. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 3.

|| Heb. iii. 6. 14.

** Heb. iii. vi. & x. Matth. xiii. 21. 22. 23.

†† John xiv. 15.—23. & xv. 17. & 1 John iii. 22. 23. 24.

‡‡ Rom. viii. 14. 17. 23.—26. Gal. iv. 6.

||| Psal. lxxxix. 26.

us, he is expecting till his enemies be made his footstool *.

For when the Holy Ghost seals † believers unto this day of redemption, and is in them the earnest of the inheritance ‡, he is but bringing into their souls a ray of that light of the Father's countenance, wherewith the soul of Jesus Christ is made exceeding glad at his right hand. And, as water is poured from one vessel into another, so he pours into their souls, from the soul of Jesus Christ, a portion of that glorious sense of the Father's love, wherewith his soul is made unspeakably glad. So that they joy in God through Jesus Christ, by whom they have received the atonement, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost ||. It is by reason of this hope they are not ashamed; for it is a portion of the inheritance, or of the rest into which Christ is entered, and a certain pledge of the full enjoyment; it is the first fruits and the earnest of the inheritance. This is the highest confirmation of their faith of the resurrection of the Son of God, the utmost evidence in them of his being the Son of God, and of their being the children of God through him, and the nearest communion they can have with him in his rest, while they are in this world. And it is a foretaste of what the souls of them that sleep in Jesus enjoy with him in heaven, where they are with him, expecting the redemption of their bodies, when his enemies shall be made his footstool **. They who profess the faith of the gospel, and rest content without partaking in the promise of the Holy Ghost, or are not seeking after it, in the way prescribed in the New Testament, give no evidence of their labouring to enter into Christ's rest, but are exposing themselves to fall in the wilderness by unbelief.

The Holy Ghost caused Jesus Christ to rest in his body, as well as in his soul. This doth not now appear unto his people, nor could they bear it: for the light that shone to Paul from the glorified body of Christ, struck him blind; his eyes could not bear it ††, and he fell to the earth.

* Heb. x. 13. † Eph. iv. 30.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 21. 22. & Eph. i. 13. 14.

|| Rom. v. 5. 11.

** 2 Cor. v. 1.—9. Phil. i. 23. Rev. vi. 9. 10. 11.

†† Acts ix. 3. 4. 17. 18. & xxii. 11.

But we are sure it is such glory, as the exceeding greatness of the might of the power of the Holy Ghost could work upon the body of the Son of God, as the reward of his sufferings and death; and therefore it is far beyond any thing in the first creation: for it is the beginning of a new creation.

Unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ the bodies of his people are to be conformed, when he comes again from heaven to bring them into his rest. He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself *. And when he appears, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is †. Thus, as they have borne the image of the earthly man, the first Adam, who was of the earth, earthy; they must bear the image of the heavenly man, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven ‡, with his glorified body, that the bodies of his people may be glorified with that same glory. Then, at last, the whole creation will be changed as a garment, and suited to the glorified body of Jesus Christ, and the bodies of his brethren, as the first creation was suited to the body of the first Adam; and then the creature will rest from the bondage into which it was brought by sin, and in its own way partake of the glorious liberty of the children of God ||.

CHAP. IV. *How Christ's people obtain communion with him, and how his union with them is represented in the scripture.*

HAVING thus far considered the society of the three divine persons in the Son of God, the works he finished, and the rest into which he is entered, and having seen the fellowship that sinners of mankind are admitted to have with them in their partaking with Jesus Christ, who hath ceased from his works, and is entered into his rest; let us

* Phil. iii. 20. 21.

† 1 John iii. 2.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.—50.

|| Psal. cii. 26. & civ. 31. & cxlv. 10. Phil. ii. 10. Rev. v. 13. Rem. viii. 19.—23. & Rev. xxi. 5. & 2 Pet. iii. 12. 13.

proceed

proceed to observe how they obtain communion with him, and how his union with them is set forth in the scripture.

SECT. I. *Communion with Christ obtained by faith.*

NOW we partake with him by faith, or by the belief of the truth of the promise of entering into his rest, as it stands in the new and everlasting covenant, which is ratified by his blood, who was brought again from the dead by the blood of that covenant. The apostle plainly declares, that they who believe the gospel do enter into rest, and shews that all unbelievers, and none but they, are excluded from this rest. We may see from what has been observed, concerning the unbelief of the Israelites in the wilderness, what it is they are called to believe, who would enter into that rest. For Israel's gospel was a type of ours, and their faith and their unbelief with respect to that, was an example unto us of our faith and unbelief, and of the issues of them. And by what has been already said, we may have some view of the import of those short and comprehensive accounts of what we are called to believe, "That the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world; That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; That God raised him from the dead;" and the like.

The true belief of this is the effect of the Father's love, that sent his Son into the world, and of his commandment that brought him from the dead. It is at the same time the effect of the merit of the blood of the Son of God, through which he came again from the dead; and likewise the effect of the working of the might of the power of the Holy Ghost, which wrought in his resurrection; and so we rise with Christ through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead*.

For whatever they may think, who find their account in a national faith, and hold that for the confession of the faith of Christ, which is no way owing to the evidence and power of the gospel, nor attended with any of the proper outward fruits of the gospel: yet still it must hold true, "That whosoever believeth, that Jesus is the Christ, is

* Col. ii. 12.

" born

“ born of God, loveth God, and keepeth his command-
 “ ments, and overcometh the world by believing that Je-
 “ sus is the Son of God *.” And as to the confession of
 this faith, it is as true, “ That no man can say, that Jesus
 “ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost †.” They do indeed
 distinguish saving faith from their national faith, and
 (which is more) from the faith of devils, by placing the
 nature of it in such inward actings and dispositions of the
 heart, as are the effects and concomitants of the belief of
 the truth of the gospel, providing always that these be at-
 tended with such a sober life, as men may easily lead with-
 out being influenced by the power of the gospel. Yet it is
 manifest that the apostle James doth not distinguish the faith
 of God’s elect from the faith of devils, by placing the nature
 of it in any thing else than the belief of the truth of the
 gospel, but by the good works required in the gospel, which
 are the fruits of the unfeigned belief of the gospel, and
 whereby it manifests itself to be true ‡. And he points out
 to us some of these works where he says, “ But be ye doers
 “ of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own
 “ selves. — Pure and undefiled religion before God and
 “ the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows
 “ in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from
 “ the world ||.”

That belief of the truth of the gospel whereby we partake
 with Jesus Christ, and enter into his rest, depends on the tes-
 timony of the Three that bear record in heaven, the Father,
 the Word, and the Holy Ghost **. This testimony is brought
 down to the earth by the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus Christ
 sent from the Father, and under whose guidance and by
 whose power the apostles bare witness of the death and re-
 surrection of the Lord Jesus, and declared the import of it
 in the gospel, which they left written to us in the New
 Testament ††. The faith whereby we enter into rest with
 Jesus Christ, depends not on the testimony of man, leans
 not on the traditions of our fathers as the ground of it,
 nor on the imaginations of our own hearts, nor on the

* 1 John v. 1.—5. † 1 Cor. xii. 3. ‡ James ii. 18. 19. 20.

|| James i. 22.—27. See likewise Heb. vi. 9. 10. 11. and x.

32. 33.

** 1 John v. 5.—11.

†† John xv. 26. 27. and xvi. 13. 14. 15.; Acts i. 4. 8.; Luke
 xxiv. 46.—49.; 1 Pet. i. 12.; 2 Pet. i. 15.

testimony of any spirit, but that which speaks to us in the holy scriptures; whose testimony is the testimony of the Three that bear record in heaven, who are one. This testimony shews itself to be divine, by the divine glory shining in it to them who believe, who, in the keeping of the commandments of the gospel, and in bearing the afflictions of the gospel, have that testimony confirmed in them by the Spirit witnessing with their spirits, that they are children of God, his heirs, and joint heirs with Christ.

We may see the reason why the believers of Christ's resurrection are baptized and blessed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; when we consider, that they believe Jesus Christ the Son of God rose again through the infinite merit of his own blood, and by the glory of the Father fully manifested in his death, and by the infinite power of the Holy Ghost; and when we consider this faith, as coming into their souls from the good pleasure of the Father, who raised him from the dead, through his righteousness who arose by his own blood, and by the power of the Holy Ghost that wrought in his resurrection; and when we consider, that the ground of this faith is the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that by this faith we partake with Christ, and have fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Spirit.

SECT. II. *Christ's union with his people set forth under the notion of one body, or one new man.*

When the believers of Christ's resurrection are washed with water †, in the name of the divine Three, and so receive the sign of their union and communion with Christ in his death and resurrection ‡, and of the sprinkling of their hearts from an evil conscience || by the blood of the everlasting covenant**; then they are said to be baptized into one body ††, whereof the man Christ Jesus, who is the Son of God, is the head, and the Holy Ghost is

* Matth. xxviii. 19.; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. with Num. xxii. 27.

† Mark vii. 4.; Tit. iii. 5. 6.; Heb. x. 22.

‡ Rom. vi. 3.—11.; Col. ii. 12.

|| Heb. x. 22.; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

** Heb. ix. 19. 23. & xii. 24. †† 1 Cor. xii. 12. 13.

the Spirit, and the Father of Jesus is the Father*. This one body, whereof Christ is the head, and which is all animated by his Spirit, is from him called Christ †, and the Son ‡. For, by its union with the head, the Son, and relation unto him, it is united with and related to the Father, who is above it all as the Father, through it all by his Son, and in all the members of it by his Spirit; and this one new man is the whole seed of the woman, distinguished from and opposed unto the seed of the serpent, in the first promise.

The way of speaking concerning the general assembly and church of the first-born as one body, one new man, thus united with the divine Three, seems to be taken from that ancient figure or hieroglyphic, the cherubim, which appeared to Adam, after he heard the first promise, and after he was driven out from the garden, and from the tree of life, and was afterwards set up in the tabernacle and temple. The only distinct particular description we have of the cherubim, is that which is given by the prophet Ezekiel, who saw them in a vision, in the first and tenth chapters of his book. Unto his description of them there is a reference in the fourth and fifth chapters of the book of the Revelation, when John is describing the vision he had of a temple, and of the glory of the Lord. Now, in the description Ezekiel gives of a cherub, (for they all had one appearance), we find it is expressly said, *This was its appearance, it had the likeness of a man*||. A cherub was the appearance of the body of a man with a man's face**.

Therefore, when John brings in the cherubim saying to the Lamb, *Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, &c.* †† we cannot take this appearance of a man for any thing else but a hieroglyphic of the church, which is so frequently set forth in the New Testament, under the notion of a man, and the body of a man. Upon this appearance of a man there was the face of a lion, joined to the face of the man ‡‡. John points out to us the intent of the face of the lion, when he speaks of the Lion

* Eph. iv. 3. 4. 5. 6. 13. 15. 16.

† 1 Cor. xii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

|| Ezek. i. 5. and x. 20.

** Ezek. i. 10.

†† Rev. iv. 6. 7. and v. 8. 9.

‡‡ Ezek. i. 10.

of the tribe of Judah, the root of David * ; which can be no other but the Son of God, whose emblem is light, whereof the lion was the hieroglyphic, as we noticed before ; and the cherub was likewise full of eyes †, denoting light.

This leads us to consider the meaning of the other two faces. The ox or calf sending forth horns, was, as we noticed before, the hieroglyphic of fire, sending forth rays of light, which is the emblem of the Father of lights ‡. For both the Old Testament and the New set him forth under the notion of fire, a consuming fire || ; and the cherubim had the face of an ox, and their feet like the feet of an ox or calf **, sparkling like the colour of burnished brass. We likewise observed before, that the eagle was the hieroglyphic of air or wind, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost. Now, the cherubim had the face of an eagle with wings †† ; and it is remarkable, that the appearance of the living creature, the cherub, was with air or wind, which is called the spirit of the living creature ††, and with fire and light.

The prophet describes their appearance thus: " Behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness about it ; also, out of the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures |||. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance like burning coals of fire †, like the appearance of lamps. It went up and down among the living creatures, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went out lightning, and the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning +, and whither the spirit or the wind was to go, they went ++." There seems to be a reference to what Ezekiel says of the noise of the wings of the cherubim, chap. i. ver. 24. in the 14th chapter of the Revelation, ver. 2. 3. and chap. xix. ver. 6. when John is speaking of the worship of the church. For the church cannot worship God, but as it is quickened

* Rev. v. 5. † Ezek. x. 12. Rev. iv. 6. 8.

‡ James i. 17. Psal. cxlviii. 14. Luke i. 69. Psal. cxxxii. 17.

|| Deut. iv. 24. & ix. 3. Heb. xii. 29.

** Ezek. i. 7. 10. †† Ezek. i. 10. 11. Rev. iv. 7. 8.

†† Ezek. i. 20. 21. ||| Ib. ver. 4. 5.

† They are called *seraphim*, If. chap. vi. from their fiery appearance.

+ Ib. ver. 13. 14. Matth. xxiv. 27. ++ ver. 12.

by the Spirit, and by virtue of its union with the divine Three. The appearance of the glory of the Lord, which Ezekiel saw about the cherubim, was the likeness, as the appearance of a man upon a throne, with fire and light *. John saw the same †; and this was a representation of the person of Jesus Christ, who is the image of the invisible God, the object of worship.

Adam saw the vision of the cherubim, after he heard the promise of the seed of the woman ‡. What could be more proper to represent the seed of the woman to him than the appearance or likeness of a man? When he heard of the distinction between the two seeds, he gave up the seed of the serpent for dead, and called his wife || *the mother of all living*, and so professed his faith in the promise concerning the seed of the woman. And the cherub is called the living creature. It appears alive out of the midst of the fire, the consuming fire of the divine justice, where the seed of the serpent cannot live; and the cherub appears armed with that flame as a sword to destroy the serpent and his seed ** from the way of the tree of life, and to keep possession of the tree of life, and defend it against them. Adam heard of a contention between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; and now he saw the likeness of the seed of the woman *as contending* ††, in possession of the tree of life again, and fully able to keep possession of it against the serpent and all his seed; and this served exceedingly to comfort him when he was for his sin driven out of the garden, and from the tree of life.

In the 28th chapter of Ezekiel from the 11th to the 19th verse, the king of Tyre is called a *cherub*, a corrupted cherub, through pride and through merchandise. But a careful observer of the references to this passage, in the book of the Revelation, speaking of Antichrist, or the corrupted apostate church, may see, that the king of Tyre stands there as a type of Antichrist, whom the New Testament calls a man, a man of sin, even as the true church is called one new man in Christ Jesus. And the things that are said of the king of Tyre apply far better to Antichrist, a

* Ezek. i. 27. 28.

† Rev. iv. 23.

‡ Gen. iii. 15. 24.

|| Gen. iii. 20.

** Psal. cxlix. 26. 7.

†† *CHERUB* may be derived from *RUB*, to contend, and *CHE*, the particle denoting *likeness*.

church well formed at first, but falling away from the primitive purity, and corrupted through pride and traffic with the kings of the earth, and so cast out as profane, and at last utterly destroyed. It is true, this cannot be the case of the church of the first-born, which can never fall away *, but of a visible church it may. And as a visible church gets the name church from the true church whereof it is the sign, (in like manner as the bread and wine in the Lord's supper get the name of Christ's body and his blood, whereof they are the signs), so may a visible church, that comes together to the Lord's supper, be called a cherub, from the true cherub whereof it is the sign and representation †. And this we may say, that a cherub always signifies a church; and if there were any creatures about the throne of God in the higher heavens made in the figure of the church, as Adam was the figure of him that was to come; this would do something to satisfy them who cannot get clear of the thought that the cherubim or seraphim were a kind of angels. But there is not enough of evidence for it.

This subject shall divert us no longer than we have observed these words spoken to the king of Tyre as a cherub, *Thou sealest up the sum full of wisdom and perfect in beauty* ‡. This holds true in the church, as it stands united with the divine Three, especially when it comes to a perfect man in Christ Jesus, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, when all Christ's members shall be perfected in one, and perfectly subjected to the Father, and brought to full rest with God, who will be all in all: for then will it appear full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. And even now unto the angels, is known by the church the manifold wisdom of God ||. The sum of this wisdom and perfection of beauty was sealed up in the hieroglyphic, the cherubim, before the use of letters; and after the revelation of God's counsel began to be written in letters at Mount Sinai, this hieroglyphic (which had been spoiled and perverted to idolatry by the Heathen) was continued in the tabernacle and in the temple till the Babylonish captivity, when, lest the knowledge of it should be lost, Ezekiel saw it in a vision, and described it particularly. And indeed the sum of the revelation of the wisdom of God in the scriptures was sealed up in this same figure.

* 1 John ii. 18. 19.

† Ezech. xxviii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 16. 17. and xii. 12. 27.

|| Eph. iii. 10.

There were other figures of the church in the temple, as the candlestick, the palm-tree, the governors of the twenty-four courses of the priests, and likewise of the fingers, the governors of the sanctuary; and the temple itself was a type of the church. But the design of the cherubim was to represent the church in its union with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, through Christ Jesus its head; and perhaps the two set in the holiest of all, looking to the propitiation, might signify the Old-testament church and the New, with their respects to the true propitiation. And so much for the Cherubim.

CHAP. V. *Of the day of rest.*

LET us come now, at last, to consider the day of rest; even that day that remains to the people of God, on account of his resting from his works, who is entered into his rest, even as God rested the seventh day from all his works.

SECT. I. *The apostle's train of reasoning about days of rest considered.*

THis passage has been much darkened, by the translation, to the people, who are ready to take Jesus in the 8th verse, for Jesus Christ, and to understand the word *rest*, in the 9th verse, in the same sense wherein it stands in the context; whereas the original word, which is rendered *rest* here, is vastly different from that which is translated *rest* throughout the passage: for it is nothing else but the Hebrew word for the celebration of the day of rest, or for resting on the sabbath-day, expressed in the Greek manner, even as Joshua is called *Jesus*. It is true there is some amendment made for this, by placing *Joshua*, and *the keeping of a sabbath*, on the margin; but every body that reads the text, or hears it read, does not consider that; and the text is more regarded than the margin. And therefore it had been far better, for them for whom the New Testament was translated into English, that the word *sabbatism* had been retained in the translation, than that the word *rest* should stand for it: for they would far more readily perceive, that the

the keeping of a sabbath-day was intended by that word, than by the word *rest*.

When we consider the connection of this 9th verse with what goes before, and likewise with the following verse, we may understand that the apostle plainly intends the Christian day of rest. These words, *There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God*, are manifestly the apostle's inference from what he was just before saying, of the Holy Ghost's setting some other day than the seventh day, when he speaks in the 95th Psalm of another rest to be entered into, than the rest from the works of creation, or the rest in the land of Canaan from God's works in Egypt and the wilderness, both which had been entered into a long time before. And as he infers from the Holy Ghost's speaking again of entering into his rest, so long a time after the second rest was entered into, that there is a promise left us of entering into his rest, which we now enter into by faith; so he infers from his setting some other day than the seventh which was long before set, that there is a *sabbatism*, or the keeping of a day of rest, left to the people of God. And so when he shews us, that the Holy Ghost speaking in David, concerning entering into his rest, intended that rest into which the voice of God in the gospel now calls us to enter, he at the same time declares, that, by saying, *To-day*, he is pointing out and fixing a day for that rest. And the apostle expressly distinguishes this certain day from the seventh, which belonged to God's first rest, and likewise to the rest into which Joshua led the people of Israel: for he says, "He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. — Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, *To-day*, after so long a time; as it is said, *To-day*, if ye will hear his voice. — For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God."

From these words of the apostle we may plainly see, 1st, That the sabbatism left to the people of God is another day than the seventh day. 2^{dly}, That the keeping of the seventh-day sabbath is done away and removed*; and the keeping of this other day as the sabbath is left, and remains to us, in place of the rest into which Joshua led the people of Israel,

* Compare Col. ii. 16. 17.

which is now no more. *3dly*, That this other day of which the Holy Ghost speaks, is a day in the proper sense; and not in the sense in which it is sometimes taken, to signify a notable season and time for some great work, however long that time be: for this must be such another day as the seventh; as the apostle says, “ For he spake in a certain place of the seventh on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day — Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day. — For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” *4thly*, That this other day, which remains when the sabbatism of the seventh is removed, is a day set apart, from our own works which are lawfully done on any other day, unto him who hath rested from his works, and is entered into his rest: for it is a sabbatism. And if the people of God do not observe it as a day set apart to him who hath ceased from his works, by ceasing from their works, which they do on any other day, then they do not sabbatize at all; and that certain day that is limited with respect to his rest, can be no more a day of rest to them than any other day; because in any other sense wherein they may be said to rest, they ought to rest every day: but there remaineth another day than the seventh, limited, set, or appointed, a sabbatism to the people of God.

By the connection of the 9th verse with the following, we see the rest for which this sabbatism is appointed to the people of God, and to which this other certain day belongs. The 10th verse informs us, that this day is set apart to him, who hath ceased from his own works, and entered into his rest, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ; for it gives the reason why this sabbatism is left to the people of God. But we are especially to notice here, that the apostle is telling us what that certain day of rest is, of which the Holy Ghost spake, when he limited a certain day, saying in David, To-day: for here he shews us, it is that day on which the Lord Jesus Christ (with whom we are partakers in the rest, if we believe *) ceased or rested from his own works. This is manifest from his words; “ For he spake of the seventh on this wise, “ And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. “ — Again, he limiteth a certain day, — another day. “ There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of “ God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath

* Heb. iii. 14. 15. & iv. 10. 11.

“ ceased

“ceased from his own works, as God from his.” Is it not evident from these words, that this other day is that same day on which he who is entered into his rest, ceased or rested from his works, even as the seventh day was that day on which God ceased or rested from his works? Now, we know that the day on which the Lord Jesus ceased from his works, and rested from that death wherein his works were finished, is the first day of the week, the morrow after the seventh day of the week, which was the Jewish sabbath *.

SECT II. *The Christian sabbath prefigured in the law of Moses.*

IT is observable, that the day on which Jesus arose from the dead, was the morrow after the great sabbath of the passover †, from which the children of Israel were appointed to count seven sabbaths, and number fifty days, to the morrow after the seventh sabbath; and that morrow after the seventh sabbath was the feast of first-fruits, even the day of Pentecost ‡. Now, we find that on the morrow after the sabbath, from which fifty days were numbered to the day of Pentecost, the sheaf of the first-fruits was waved before the Lord to be accepted for the children of Israel; and they were to eat nothing of that harvest till these first-fruits of the harvest were brought before the Lord, and accepted for them ||.

The apostle refers to this passage in the law of Moses, where he say, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and “become the first-fruits of them that slept. — But every “man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterward “they that are Christ’s at his coming **.” And in that self-same morrow after the sabbath, whereon that sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was brought before the Lord, and accepted for the children of Israel, Jesus Christ the first-fruits of them that slept, rose from the dead, for the justification of all his people.

* Matth. xxviii. 1. Mark xv. 42. & xvi. 1. 2. 9. Luke xxiii. 54. 56. & xxiv. 1. 6. 7. John xx. 1. 19.

† John xix. 31. ‡ Lev. xxiii. 4.—17. Acts i. 3. 4. 5.

|| Lev. ii. 3. 10. 11. 14. 15.

** 1 Cor. xv. 20. 23.

Again,

Again, on the morrow after the seventh sabbath was the feast of the first-fruits, an holy convocation, and it was a statute for ever in all their dwellings, throughout their generations, that they should do no servile work on that day, but rejoice before the Lord, with their children and servants, and with the Levites, and with the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows, that were among them, in the place which the Lord chose to place his name there *. With respect to these first-fruits, the apostle calls the Holy Ghost as given to believers the first-fruits, where he says, "Ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body †." And it is remarkable, that, as Christ our passover was sacrificed for us at the feast of the Passover, and was brought from the dead, as the first-fruits of them that slept, on that morrow after the sabbath whereon the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was brought before the Lord; so the first-fruits of the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost ‡, the very day of the feast of the first-fruits, the morrow after the seventh sabbath.

Thus, whether we inquire for the day whereon Christ ceased from his works in his resurrection from the dead, or the day when he was by the right hand of God exalted, and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and shed that forth on the believers of his resurrection ||, manifesting thereby that he was fully entered into his rest, still it is the morrow after the seventh day, the first day of the week. The first day of the week then is the day of rest that is left to the people of God: for, on that day, he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his on the seventh day.

This first day of the week, on which the Lord Jesus rested from his works, is called *the Lord's day*, by John in the book of the Revelation **, where he tells us, for the honour of that day, that he was in the spirit of prophecy, and saw the visions of that book, which he also wrote on that day: for he wrote the things as he saw and heard ††. This was when he could not assemble with the disciples, being confined to the isle Patmos; but he is ordered to send the book

* Lev. xxiii. 15.—21. Deut. xvi. 9.—12.

† Rom. viii. 23.

‡ Acts ii. 1.—4.

|| Acts ii. 23.

** Rev. i. 10.

†† Rev. i. 11. 16. & x. 4.

to the churches *. And it was the practice of the disciples in the churches to assemble for worship on that day †, from the time that Jesus shewed himself alive unto them, when assembled together in the evening of that same day whereon he arose ‡.

On the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, the apostles, and they that were with them, even all the hundred and twenty, were all with one accord in one place ||, in the morning of that day **, when the Holy Ghost came upon them. And then the truth of the joyful feast of the first-fruits took place: for in such an assembly of the believers of the Lord's resurrection, and no where else on the earth, hath the Lord placed his name; seeing there is the representation of the true Israel, all partaking of their one altar, Jesus Christ ††; and such assembling together is connected with our drawing near to God in the heavenly sanctuary ‡‡. The truth of the feast of first-fruits was kept first on earth, in the assembly of believers of the Lord's resurrection, who then began to rejoice before the Lord, on account that Jesus was entered into his rest, and that possession was now taken of that good land, when they shared in the first-fruits of it; and their joy in the Holy Ghost enlarged their hearts towards others that they might have fellowship with them ||||; yea, and loosed them to from a rest in this world, that they abounded in extraordinary liberal distributions of their substance to the needy †. And from thenceforth the disciples in the churches exerted themselves in this joyful liberality †, especially on this first day of the week, as we find the apostle calling them to it, when he is requiring a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem ††.

* Rev. i. 11. & xxii. 16.

† Acts xx. 7. compared with 1 Cor. xi. 28. Acts xx. 22.

‡ Luke xxiv. 1. 13. 33. 36. & John xx. 19. 26.

|| Acts ii. 1. with i. 14. 15. ** Acts ii. 15.

†† 1 Cor. x. 15. 16. 17. 18. with Exod. xx. 24. Deut. xii.

13. 14.

‡‡ Heb. x. 19.—25. Lev. xxvi. 2.

|||| Acts ii. 38. 39. † Acts ii. 45. 46.

† 2 Cor. viii. 1. 2. 3. 4. †† 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

SECT III. *The day of rest left to the people of God.*

THE positive institution of a day of rest, or a sabbatism, was never given but to *the people of God*. For Adam was in friendship with God, and admitted to rest with him in his rest from his works, when the seventh day was first instituted as the day of rest; and when he lost rest with God, and was separated from him by sin, he had no more hope of rest (and therefore no use for that day of rest) but through the promised seed, Christ. And God gave not the sabbath-day to the nations, that were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants, having no hope in the promise, and without God in the world; but he gave it to his own nation, of which that promised seed was to spring, his nation that sprang from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by virtue of his promise to them, that he would make their seed a nation, and give them the land of Canaan; the nation which he set apart to himself, as a type of his true heavenly nation, the general assembly and church of the first-born. To that nation he gave the sabbath-day as a sign between him and them, that he, their God, was the creator of the heavens and the earth, in opposition to the gods of the nations; and that he made them to rest with him from the bondage of Egypt from which he was their redeemer.

When the seed, Christ, came of that nation, he abolished the distinction of the nations by his death, disannulling the covenant that was made with the nation of Israel *, and confirming the new covenant † with the heavenly nation ‡, which he redeemed by his own blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ||; and then he gave commission to his apostles, to teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost **, or to make disciples of all nations, by teaching and baptizing the disciples. This commission they executed, by testifying

* Eph. ii. 11.--19.

† Heb. xiii. 20. and viii. & ix.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 9. 10.

|| Rev. v. 9. 10.

** Matth. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. 16. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8.

the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and declaring fully the import of it among the nations; to the Jews first *, and then to all the nations without difference of Jew or Gentile, and baptizing the disciples †, (with their infants ‡), or the believers of the resurrection, in the name of the Lord. For when God visited the nations by their ministry, he did not take any whole nation, or any nation in the capacity of a nation, as a people for his name. But he visited the nations, to take out of them a people for his name ||. And thus he appeared in the performance of that promise to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.*

The apostle is here speaking to the people whom God took out of the Jewish nation for his name, and puts them in mind of the beginning of their confidence in the joyful profession of the faith and hope of the gospel **, which he calls them to hold fast, lest they should fall after the example of Israel's unbelief ††. He calls them not to cast away the confidence they had professed in their enduring a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst they were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst they became companions of them that were so used ‡‡; and he exhorts them to give all diligence in their former work and labour of love, shewed toward his name, in ministering to the saints, that they might have the full assurance of hope |||. He speaks to them as in church-order, assembling themselves together; calling them to persevere in it, considering one another to provoke unto love and good works †, looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God †; and obeying and submitting themselves to their leaders or guides, that watched for their souls, as those that should give an account ††.

* Acts ii. 38. 39. 40. & iii. 25. 26.

† Acts x.

‡ The infants of the believers of Christ's resurrection must either be reckoned with their believing parents, and so be baptized with them, according to Mark xvi. 16. or with them that believe not, and so be damned, and so the children of believers in infancy must perish; contrary to the plain revelation of the grace of our Lord toward infants.

|| Acts xv. 7. 14. 15. 17.

** Heb. iii. 6. 13. 14.

†† Heb. iv. 14.

‡‡ Heb. x. 32.—35.

||| Heb. vi. 9. 10. 11.

† Heb. x. 23. 24. 25.

† Heb. xiii. 17.

†† Heb. xiii. 17.

The title of the *people of God* is still proper to such a people as this, who by the power of the gospel, and the influence of the word of the apostles, on their souls, were engaged in that profession, whereof the apostle doubts not to call Jesus Christ the *Apostle* and *High Priest*, when he addresses himself thus to them, as he is about to speak of the Christian rest, and day of rest, "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus *." Unto such a people whom God thus takes out of any nation for his name, the sabbatism is left and remaineth, now when the seventh-day sabbath, that God gave to the nation of Israel, is removed.

Such are the people of whom the apostle makes the people of Israel the example †, in this passage. But such are not the nations of this world, as they have been brought under the Christian name, by secular power concurring with the clergy, and giving them dominion over the world. These are the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, the many waters where sitteth the whore ‡, or the false church, that committeth fornication with the kings of the earth ||. For her children were not begot by the power of the word and Spirit of Jesus Christ, whereby God takes out of the nations a people for his name; but by the power of the kings of the earth that commit fornication with her. This is that Antichrist, that man of sin, whose coming was after the working of Satan, the prince of this world, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved **. And these are the nations that tread under foot the outer court of the Lord's house, while it is left out and not measured ††; the strangers that have been brought into the sanctuary of the Lord's house, contrary to the law of the house, to pollute it ‡‡. These are the nations that worship the beast, or the clergy to whom the prince of this world hath given power to reign ||| in the broken Roman

* Heb. iii. 1. † Heb. iii. 6.—19. & iv. 1. 2. 11.

† Rev. xvii. 1. 15. ‡ Rev. xvii. 2. & xviii. 3.

** 2 Theff. ii. 8.—11. †† Rev. xi. 1. 2.

‡‡ Ezek. xlv. 5.—9. & xliii. 7.—12. & xxxiv.

||| Math. iv. 8. 9. 10. Rev. xiii. 4.

empire, by the power of the kingdoms that arose in it, which gave their power to the clergy *. These are opposed to the nations of them that are saved †, and to all the followers of the Lamb that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, and are conformed to him in patience, not loving their lives unto the death ‡.

For this is one remarkable difference between Christ and Antichrist. Christ takes a people out of the nations, and brings them in subjection to him by the power of his own word and Spirit, according to his commission to his ministers, “Go teach all nations, and lo I am with you, — teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” But antichrist takes whole nations unto his name, as he sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, and brings them in subjection to himself by the power of the kings of the earth, who give him their strength; and the prince of this world, Satan, works to his purpose, with signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness.

The baptizing of the nations, thus brought under a form of Christianity, fitted to them who deny the power of it §, was a horrible prostitution and profanation of the Christian profession and baptism, and of all the ordinances of the Christian worship, and of the privileges of the Christian brotherhood, to which worldly men, utter strangers to the power of the word of God, were thus introduced. And it was a great profanation of the sabbatism of the people of God, to oblige the nations to keep the first day of the week as Christians, who could not therein shew regard and subjection to the authority and power of the Lord Jesus, but unto that authority and power that constrained them to keep it, which also appointed and obliged them to keep many other holy-days without any warrant in the New Testament. Christ gave commission to make disciples by the gospel, and to teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded the apostles; but he gave no commission to procure an observance of the things which he commanded, by virtue of any other authority or power, but that of his word; and all force or compulsion is in-

* Rev. xiii. 1.—10. & xvii. 12. 13.

† Rev. xxi. 24.—27. & vii. 9. 13. 14. 15.

‡ Rev. xiii. 10. & xiv. 9.—12. & xii. 11. 17.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 5.

consistent with the nature of the obedience he requires, and with the profession of subjection to him in doing the things that he says.

C H A P. VI. *How the Christian sabbath is profaned, evinced from the design of its institution, and the primitive way of keeping it.*

THE profanation of the Christian sabbatism, by the antichristian power, obliging the nations to keep it, may appear to them who consider the import of keeping the first day of the week as a sabbath, as it is left to the people of God in the New Testament. And this is what we are now to consider.

SECT. I. *The Christian sabbath left for a sign, that all works requisite to justification are already finished.*

THE sabbatism left to the people of God in the New Testament is a sign between the Lord and them, that he hath ceased from his own works, and is entered into his rest. This is manifest from the apostle's words on the subject. And therefore their resting from their own works on that day, is a solemn profession of the faith of his having ceased from his works who is entered into his rest, and of the belief of that promise with which this sabbatism is left to the people of God.

The profession of this faith, in resting from our works (that may be done on other days) upon the first day of the week, stands in opposition to all ways of going about to establish a righteousness of our own: for it is the profession of the belief of the promise of entering into his rest, who hath rested from his own works. And therefore we find the apostle opposing the belief and confession of Christ's resurrection unto self-righteousness, where he says *, "They
" being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about
" to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted
" themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is
" the end of the law for righteousness to every one that

* Rom. x. 3.—10.

" believeth.

“ believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which
“ is of the law, That the man which doth these things shall
“ live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith
“ faith,—The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in
“ thine heart: that is the word of faith which we preach,
“ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Je-
“ sus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath rai-
“ sed him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the
“ heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the
“ mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Whosoever therefore is ignorant of the way of salvation through Christ's righteousness, and goes about to establish a righteousness of his own, is not believing that Christ came down from heaven to fulfil the righteousness of the law for his people, is not really persuaded that God raised him from the dead for their justification, and gave him the life promised in the law to him that should do these things *. Whosoever they be then that shew a confidence in their own merit, or manifest a desire to establish a righteousness of their own, in any shape, are acting as inconsistently with the faith of Christ's resurrection, and shew as much disregard to the sabbatism of the people of God, as if they laboured in their ordinary employments on that day. They therefore who are openly self-righteous, are open profaners of the Christian sabbath. But the antichristian nations, that were never illuminated by the word of faith that the apostles preached, keep the first day of the week, as they speak of Christ's merit, and of his resurrection. Yet, according to the scripture-connection of things, the sabbatism left unto the people of God, is a notable mean of their perseverance in the faith of Christ's resurrection, and of keeping them from forgetting the righteousness of Christ. And if they consider what they are doing, when resting from their ordinary works on the first day of the week, and what this their practice is declaring, they cannot but find themselves severely rebuked by it, and convinced of hypocrisy, so far as they indulge themselves in unbelief, and self-righteousness which necessarily attends it.

* Rom. x. 6. 7.

SECT. II. *The keeping of the Christian sabbath imports a profession of faith in the promise of the heavenly inheritance.*

AS the profession of the faith in the sabbatism stands in opposition to the seeking of rest through our own righteousness, (which is opposite both to the light of nature, that shews us death, the judgment of God against all sin *, and to the light of the gospel, that shews us life from the dead in Jesus Christ); so it stands likewise in opposition to our seeking a rest in this world. For it is a profession of the belief of the promise of the new covenant, of entering into his rest, who hath ceased from his own works, and is entered into his rest on the right hand of God in the heavens.

The rest that was promised to the nation of Israel, was on this earth in the land of Canaan, and the Lord brought the nation into that earthly rest, after the generation that provoked him by their unbelief, had fallen in the wilderness. But now that rest is removed, to give place to the heavenly rest whereof it was the type; and the promise that is left and remains to the people of God, is the promise of entering into the heavenly rest, or the rest of the world to come, with Christ who is entered into his rest. The sabbatism that is left then, is no sign to us of any worldly rest like that whereof the seventh day was a sign to Israel, as it belonged to the promise of rest in the land of Canaan; but it is a sign, betwixt the Lord and his people, of that rest into which Christ has entered, and of entering into which they have the promise left them.

Now, this is a remarkable difference betwixt the sabbatism of the seventh day, and of the first day of the week, that the rest of the one was always earthly, even from its first institution to Adam, till it was done away in Christ; and the rest of the other is not earthly, but heavenly. The earthly blessings that Adam enjoyed in paradise, while he rested with God, are not in the promise left to the people of God; nor yet the temporal blessings, in the earthly places of Canaan, into which Israel entered; but all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus †; an inhe-

* Rom. i. 32.

† Eph. i. 3.

ritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation *. The promise left to the people of God, is a promise of entering into his rest, through much tribulation † in this world, in conformity to him who first suffered unto death, and then entered into his glory, when he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven ‡.

If we really believe the promise, and be not under the strong delusion that has come on the professors of Christianity, because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might believe this lie, that they might seek rest in this world, and study to enter into Christ's rest also; or that the service of God and Mammon ||, the friendship of God and of this world **, are not inconsistent; or that we may love the world, and the things of the world, and yet have the love of the Father in us ††: if, I say, we be not under this strong antichristian delusion, but really believe the promise of rest with Christ, who died and rose again, as it stands in the New Testament, then this faith will necessarily produce that desire in us, which is expressed by the apostle, when he says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead ‡‡."

The sabbatism, as it is left to the people of God, with the promise of entering into his rest who hath ceased from his works, is a solemn profession of this, and of our compliance with that exhortation, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ||||," &c.

The sabbatism of the people of God is a profession of denying ourselves to a life or a rest in this present evil

* 1 Pet. i. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

† Acts xiv. 22.

‡ Luke xxiv. 26. Rom. viii. 17. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 11. 12.

|| Matth. vi. 24.

** James iv. 4.

†† 1 John ii. 15. 17. 18.

‡‡ Phil. iii. 3.—21.

|||| Col. iii. 1.—6.

world, from which Christ redeemed his people by his death *, and of taking up our cross, and following him † unto that rest into which he is entered. The people of God profess not to seek those things that the nations seek, but to seek first the kingdom God and his righteousness, believing the word of God, that the things that pertain to this life will be given, as far as they can be added unto our attaining that kingdom ‡. They profess not to live in the world any way independently of the word of God, nor by dissembling, denying, or forbearing to practise, any one word of God, but by every word of God ||. And this renunciation of a worldly rest, for that into which Christ entered, which is the necessary fruit and evidence of the faith of that promise, did from the beginning shew itself two ways in the practice of the people of God.

1. It appeared in their bearing the reproach of Christ, and taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, being supported and encouraged only with the prospect of entering into the heavenly rest into which Christ is entered **. And the apostle calls them to shew it further, when he exhorts them, “to run the race set before us with patience, “looking to Jesus, who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame;” and tells them, “Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against “sin ††.”

2. This renunciation of a rest in this world, for his rest who hath ceased from his works, and is entered into his rest, evidenced itself in their work and labour of love, in ministering to the saints, wherein the apostle calls them to shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end ‡‡. The people of God studied to keep themselves unspotted from the world, in doing good to all men, especially the household of faith, with that wherewith other men fed either the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life; and they laid not up for themselves treasures of those things on earth, which the moth and rust might there corrupt, or thieves steal, but they laid them up in heaven by giving them in alms |||; knowing, that where their treasure was, there their hearts would be at-

* Gal. i. 4.

† Math. xvi. 21.—26.

‡ Ib. vi. 3.—34.

|| Ib. iv. 4.

** Heb. x. 32. 33. 34.

†† Heb. xii. 1.—4.

‡‡ Ib. vi. 10. 11. 12.

||| Matth. vi. 19. 20. with Luke xii. 21. 33. 34.

fo*; and so even in their poverty they were richly liberal, doing alms to their power, and beyond their power they were willing†. Thus the belief of Christ's resurrection, and of the promise left of entering into his rest, turned the hearts of the people of God from seeking a rest in this world, to seek rest with Jesus Christ, and to manifest this in their practice.

The sabbatism, as it is left to the people of God, is a profession of this. But it can have no such meaning to the nations of this world, who have been brought into the outer court of the Lord's house, to tread it under foot. For as it is a thing inconsistent, for a nation of this world, as such, to confess itself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth, in the hope of the promise of eternal rest with Christ; so the people of the nations, who are observing the first day of the week, only by virtue of the authority and power of the nation obliging them to it, and the force of custom in the place of the world where they live, would reckon it very ridiculous to affix any such meaning to their sabbath-keeping, even as they do not find themselves any way inhibited from pursuing a rest in this world, or from walking according to the course of it, by their renouncing of this world at their baptism. For they cannot imagine that the Christian world is renounced, in that baptism wherewith the Christian nations are baptized.

SECT. III. *The Christian sabbath a mean of perseverance and guard against apostasy.*

HOWever, the sabbatism as it is left to the people of God, with the promise of entering into Christ's rest, is a mean of their arising and departing from this world as their rest, unto that rest into which Christ is entered, and serves to convince them of hypocrisy, so far as they indulge themselves in the love of this world, and the things thereof, and in seeking rest here through unbelief. When the multitude that followed Christ, proposing some worldly advantage by him, went back from him, as they found him speaking of nothing but eternal life through his death, he proposed this question to the twelve, *Will ye also go away?* And when they professed to cleave to him for that

* Matth. vi. 21.

† 2 Cor. viii. 1. 2. 3. 4

eternal life, which was only to be found in his words, he says to them, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil* *? that is, one of you whom I have chosen to be with me in my ministry on the earth, and to preach to the nation of the Jews, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, yet stands better affected, at the bottom of his heart, to this present life, and his interest in this present world, than to that eternal life which is in my words, and for which you now profess to cleave to me when others are gone away; and that regard to this life, more than to the words of eternal life, secretly fostered in his soul, under the good profession he now makes, is a principle of disaffection and hatred against me, which will at last appear, when he is no more able to reconcile it to himself with the hope of eternal life.

Thus there are many, on whom the gospel has influence to bring them to a joyful confident profession of the faith among the people of God, who, when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, and they come to be touched with it, in the most tender part where they stand best affected to this present world, come at last to be offended at the word they once received with joy †. And others there are, who, though persecution because of the word do not press them so hard, yet have the word choked in them by the cares, riches, and pleasures of life ‡. All this is owing to the want of the true and firm belief of the truth and excellency of the promise of entering into his rest, or of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, the confidence of things hoped for ||.

The apostle calls that principle of disaffection of which we have been speaking, an evil heart of unbelief, that may lurk under a confident profession of the gospel of Christ, in them that have been illuminated †. In opposition to this, he points out to them the promise of the rest of Jesus Christ, and the sabbatism left to the people of God, and calls them to fear lest they come short of that rest through unbelief. As the sabbatism, then, is a sign between the Lord and us, with respect to his rest, and the promise of entering into it, in opposition to a rest in this world, and is, on our part, a solemn profession of that faith, which is the

* John vi. 66.—71.

† Matth. xiii. 20. 21.

‡ Ib. xiii. 22. Luke viii. 14.

|| Heb. x. 39. & xi. 1.

† Ib. iii. 12. 13. 14. & vi. 4. 5. 6.

victory over the world, and is the confidence * of things hoped for; so, in our keeping of this sabbath-day, we ought to be taking heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, to seek rest in this world.

CHAP. VII. *The Christian faith and love professed in observing the institutions for which the first believers assembled on the first day of the week.*

SECT. I. *The faith professed.*

THE faith of Christ's having ceased from his works and entered into his rest, and of the promise of entering into his rest, is likewise professed by the people of God, in the assembling of themselves together †, on the day of rest, to observe the institutions of the Christian worship, wherein they give unto God the glory of his perfections, displayed by the works from which he ceased, who is entered into his rest, resting joyfully with him in that display of his glory, and having access unto the Father through Christ by one Spirit ‡. The people of God continued assembling themselves together, especially on the first day of the week ||, from the time of the down-pouring of the Holy Ghost; and we are told, they continued stedfastly in these ordinances **.

In the apostles doctrine, or in the teaching of the apostles, who then taught by word of mouth the gospel, which they afterward wrote us. We now have it in the New Testament, that it might be read in the churches ††, as Moses was read in the synagogues every sabbath-day ‡‡, together with the scriptures of the Old Testament ||||, which are more sure, or more confirmed to us by the things written to us in the New Testament, the only true explication of the Old †. The people of God manifested their stedfast

* Translated *confidence*, 2 Cor. ix. 4. & Heb. iii. 14.

† Heb. x. 23. 24. 25.

‡ Eph. ii. 18. Heb. x. 22. 25.

‡ Acts xx. 6. 7.

** Ib. ii. 42.

†† Col. iv. 16. 1 Thess. v. 27. 2 Pet. i. 12.—15.

‡‡ Acts xv. 20. 21. 23.

|||| 1 Tim. iv. 13.

† 2 Pet. i. 19. 20. 21.

continuance in the faith of Christ's having ceased from his works, and entered into his rest, and of the promise left them of entering into his rest, (which the apostles were sent to testify and declare), by their continuing stedfastly in the doctrine of the apostles, or persevering in attendance to their teaching, in the assembling of themselves together. And now, when we can only hear the apostles teach in their writings *, wherein their whole doctrine is contained, we profess the same thing, in our continuing stedfastly in attending to their teaching in their writings, in the assembling of ourselves together.

Before elders or deacons were ordained, the apostles acted the part of elders, presidents, or bishops †, in the church that was in Jerusalem, as they were also the first deacons of the church ‡. And beside the gift of apostles, prophets, and evangelists, who were employed in giving out the New-testament revelation, which we have now complete in their writings ||, Christ hath given pastors and teachers **, and set them in the churches of his people ††, as presidents, to instruct, exhort, and guide them by the word of the apostles, feeding them with knowledge and understanding in the whole counsel of God that was declared by the apostles ‡‡, and telling them the same things that are written, but more largely, by mouth |||. Therefore the apostle bids these Hebrews obey their guides †, and suffer the word of exhortation, because he had written to them in few words +. The stedfast continuance of the people of God, in the assembling of themselves together, in attending to the exercise of this gift, as it lies in a subordination to that of the apostles, and so far as these pastors and teachers teach no other things, but the same more largely that are written by the apostles; this is likewise a profession of their perseverance in the faith of the word of the gospel, that was witnessed and declared by the apostles. Moreover, the people of God, among whom these pastors and teachers are leaders, presidents, and examples ++, are called to ex-

* Luke xvi. 29. 31. Rev. x. 2. 8. 9. 10. 11.

† Acts i. 20. 25. & vi. 3. 4. 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 John ver. 1. & 3 John ver. 1.

‡ Acts vi. 1. 2. || Rev. xxii. 18. 19. ** Eph. iv. 11.

†† 1 Tim. i. 17. ‡‡ 1 Thess. v. 12.

||| Acts xx. 17. 20.—32 † Heb. xiii. 17.

+ Ib. xiii. 22, ++ 1 Pet. v. 3.

hort one another, by the word of the gospel dwelling in them, in the assembling of themselves together *; and therefore their stedfast continuance in attending to this also, is a profession of their perseverance in the faith of the gospel, or the promise of entering into his rest, who hath ceased from his works, and is entered into his rest.

Now, our continuing stedfastly in all this, in the assembling of ourselves together, especially on the first day of the week, is our continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine; and it is not only the profession of our faith, but at the same time a notable mean of divine appointment for our perseverance in the faith of the gospel, or in hearing of his voice, and for preserving us from being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. This is likewise a notable mean of bringing unbelievers also to hear Christ's voice, who may come † into the assembly of the people of God, while they are continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine.

And in the fellowship ‡; or in contributing of their worldly substance, for the relief of the needy brethren, and for all the necessities of the church. For in this sense the word is used frequently in the New Testament ||, and is called communicating as to giving and receiving **. It can indeed signify nothing else, in this text, as it stands distinguished from the doctrine, the breaking of bread, and the prayers. For this fellowship the deacons were at first ordained, and their work is called the ministry of tables, in distinction from the ministry of the word ††: and though there was something extraordinary in the fellowship or communication of the church in Jerusalem, which was not followed by the rest of the churches; yet they had their deacons ††, whose business it was to receive and distribute the fellowship. This fellowship wherein the people of God continue stedfastly, in the assembling of themselves together, is a profession of their subjection to the gospel of Christ, which declares the grace of the Lord Jesus in making himself poor for them, though he was rich, that they through his poverty might be rich, and calls them off from a rest

* 1 Theff. v. 12. 13. 14.

† 1 Cor. xiv. 23. 24. 25.

‡ Acts ii. 42.

|| Rom. xv. 26. 2 Cor. viii. 4. 9. 13. Heb. xiii. 16. Look the Greek texts.

** Phil. iv. 15. with Rom. xii. 13. Gal. vi. 6.

†† Acts vi. 1. 2. 3.

†† Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii.

in this world, unto the rest into which he is entered. The apostle calls these Hebrews to persevere in this, when he bids them not forget the well-doing and the fellowship; because with such sacrifices God is well pleased *.

And in the breaking of bread, or the Lord's supper †, which they observed in remembrance of him ‡, who was now absent from them, having entered into his rest. For as often as they did eat this bread and drink this cup, they shewed the Lord's death in regard to his second coming ||. And so their persevering in this ordinance, in the assembling of themselves together, was a solemn profession of their faith of the promise of entering into his rest, who is entered into his rest, having ceased from his works. This ordinance is not occasional, but continual and standing, in the constant assemblies of the people of God, on the first day of the week. For they continued stedfastly in it, as well as in the doctrine, the fellowship, and the prayers; and so there is no good reason can be given for continuing stedfastly in those, and not in this.

And in the prayers. They had been engaged in this before the down-pouring of the Spirit; for from the time of our Lord's ascension, they were continuing with one accord in prayer and supplication **. And when they set about the other ordinances along with the new converts, who were added to them on the day of Pentecost, they who were added to them shewed their perseverance in the faith of the gospel, by continuing stedfastly with them in the prayers. Every thing that a church does, must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, calling on his name, giving thanks to God and the Father by him ††; and so the ordinances are gone about with prayer and praising of God. Thus we find prayer required in the occasional ordinance of the discipline ‡‡. And in the Lord's supper there is prayer in the blessing of the bread and of the cup, and likewise the singing of an hymn |||. But here we have the prayers as a distinct ordinance, wherein the believers of the Lord's resurrection were engaged, and wherein they continued stedfastly, as well as in those other ordinances, after they took

* Heb. xiii. 16.

† Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. x. 16. & xi. 24.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 24. 25.

|| 1 Cor. xi. 26.

** Acts i. 14.

†† Col. iii. 17.

‡‡ Matth. xviii. 18. 19. 1 Cor. v. 4. 5. Acts xiii. 3.

||| Matth. xxvi. 26. 27. 30.

place. Now, in this ordinance the people of God were solemnly doing that which the apostle calls them to in the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of this 4th chapter to the Hebrews.

The prayers of all saints are for his coming again, who is entered into his rest, to gather all his people into full rest with him according to his promise *, and for bringing all the elect to the knowledge of the truth, and to repentance, by the gospel, from among all sorts of men in all ages and generations while the world stands †. The growing of the whole body of Christ, animated by his Spirit, unto the stature of a perfect man, with every thing that happens in the world, with reference unto the church, (howsoever terrible it be), making way for Christ's coming, comes all in answer to the prayers of all saints.

SECT. II. *Brotherly love, in separation from the world, expressed in the Christian institutions.*

THE union of the people of God with Christ and with one another in him, which is by faith in him, who hath ceased from his works, and is entered into his rest, and their communion together as thus united, is shewed forth in their assembling together with one accord, as one body, on the day of rest; and that special fruit of the faith of the gospel, brotherly love, or their love to one another as the brethren of the Lord Jesus, for whom he died, is expressed in the assembling of themselves together, to observe the institutions of the gospel-worship ‡.

This is especially manifest in the Lord's supper, of which the apostle speaks in this manner: "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar ||?" And he

* John. xiv. 1. 2. 3. Rev. xxii. 20. & viii. 3. 4. .

† 1 Tim. ii. 1. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

‡ Heb. x. 23. 24. 25. || 1 Cor. x. 15.—18.

tells the Corinthians, that while there were schisms or divisions among them, and they were not assembling together in brotherly love, they could not eat the Lord's supper *. Now, from this passage, compared with Acts xx. 7. where we are told, "the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread," it appears that the Lord's supper was the ordinance that was chiefly intended in their coming together on the first day of the week.

This is the clearest text those have to bring for the observation of the first day of the week, in assembling on that day for worship, who see no other institution of that day as the sabbath, but the recorded practice of the first Christians. Yet it cannot be their practice, as recorded in this text, that obliges them to come together for worship every first day of the week; for, if that were the case, they would find themselves obliged by it to come together to break bread. Hence it is manifest, that their observing of this day, and not the seventh, as a sabbath, is more owing to the traditions of their fathers, the power of custom, and the authority of the laws, than to any word of God. No good reason can be brought, from the word of God, for constraining the nations to keep the first day of the week, and not obliging them, at the same time, to assemble on that day for the breaking of bread. For, it must be owned, the command of God is full as clear and peremptory for the Lord's supper, as for the first day of the week. The notion of a sabbath in general, as moral, abstract from the seventh or the first day of the week, cannot make the first day moral in distinction from the seventh; neither will the distinction of moral and positive, that serves a great many turns, be of any use in this case. For by the same power whereby the nation of Israel was restrained from servile work on the sabbath-day,*they were also obliged to keep the passover †, which was but a positive institution.

The first Christians continued stedfastly in assembling themselves together, in the churches, on the first day of the week, for the Lord's supper, while the discipline continued in its vigour, and while men became Christians only by the influence of the gospel; yea, they even took the Lord's supper oftener than once a-week. But when the nations of this world were brought in by worldly motives, and were obliged to solemnize Sunday, and to abstain from all man-

* 1 Cor. xi. 17.—20.

† Numb. ix. 13.

ner of servile work, not so much from a principle of religion, as from the authority of the laws, then the Christian discipline instituted, Matth. xviii. and 1 Cor. v. that had always attended the Lord's supper, must have been exceedingly slackened in its exercise. For how could it be otherwise, when Christianity (as it is called) became the common, and almost general religion in the Roman empire? For then multitudes were only Christians in name, leading a life almost Heathenish; and the leaders of the Christian people were going before them, as examples in the strife, who should be greatest in this world; even making use of the pretext of religion to satisfy their ambition and revenge.

Then it was that the distinction betwixt Christians and saints began to take place; and now they began to prescribe maxims and particular rules for a more perfect life, than that of common believers; and a more regular life was deemed necessary for the Lord's supper. Now, when the ancient Christian discipline, that was appointed for keeping brotherly love in its purity among the people of God, was thus overthrown, the primitive steadfast continuance of the people of God, in the breaking of bread, failed with it. And the very dread of the Lord's supper, throughout the Antichristian world, that makes the people fly from it or come to it as seldom as they well can, and with as much extraordinary preparation, as their dread can influence them to about that time, may tell us plainly the great corruption that has come upon the Christian profession, and how much things are changed from the primitive institution, if we would but allow ourselves to think on it.

In the Roman church, it is true, the priests that say mass must take it often, if that could be called the Lord's supper; but all the people are not obliged to it, save once a year, by the appointment of that church; and this is one instance of the times and laws being changed by Antichrist *. In the nations which have separated from the Roman church, there have been laws requiring partaking of the Lord's supper, in their own form of it, as a test of the people's separation from the communion of the Roman church, by which the sect by law established, has been able also to distress dissenting Protestants, whose love to their interest in this

* Dan. vii. 25. Prov. xxiv. 21.

world has not been able to overcome their fear with respect to the Lord's supper.

Now, certainly obedience to laws, requiring abstinence from servile work on a certain day of the week upon political considerations, (such as the right measure of time, and the dependence of the national religion on the state), and requiring the eating of bread and drinking of wine, in such a form, as a test of attachment to a government, can never be called obedience to Christ's institution of his sabbatism. His supper can only be observed by that same kind of people to whom he left the sabbatism, and whom he commanded to go about his supper, in remembrance of his dying love, and in love one to another, even as he loved them. For only such people as are made disciples of Christ by his word, and are described in the New Testament, are capable to shew forth Christ's body*, the church that was reconciled to God in him by his death, or to profess the Christian brotherly love to one another, in their coming together to eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

That common opinion in the Antichristian world, that those who go to the Lord's supper ought not to be living at variance, was occasioned at first by the primitive profession of brotherly love in that ordinance; but they carry it no further than general friendship and good neighbourhood in the world; which comes sometimes to be expressly pleaded in opposition to the profession of obedience to the Lord's new commandment of love among his disciples, which makes them hated in this world†, as the brotherly discipline is likewise very hateful to the nations, that worship the beast, and are angry at the least appearance of the kingdom of Christ, or of subjection to the Lamb that was slain. But as the Lord's supper was trodden under foot of the nations, and defiled, when the instituted discipline was overthrown, so it can never be restored to its first purity, till the discipline be revived in its power.

The people of God, in resting from their own works on the first day of the week, and assembling themselves together to observe the institutions of worship, and especially the Lord's supper, made a most solemn profession of the

* 1 Cor. xi. 18. 26. 27. 28. 29. with chap. x. 17. & xii. 12.

† John xv. 17. 18. 19. 1 John iii. 11. 12. 13. & chap. ii. 15.—19.

unity of the faith of the Son of God, wherein all the members of his body are growing up unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and of the one hope of their calling to enter into his rest, in opposition to self-righteousness, and to a rest in this world, and of that love wherein the body of Christ is edified; and the sabbatism is the mean of divine appointment also for conforming his people to what they professed in it. If we be conformed to this profession, we are indeed the people of God, and are keeping the sabbath in good earnest, and have a part in the great and precious promises made to the keeping of it *. But so far as it is otherwise, we are so far polluting the sabbath, and profaning it, though our zeal for the sabbath-day should run so high as did the zeal of the Pharisees, to kill men for not keeping it according to the tradition of our fathers.

SECT. III. *Of the love-feasts anciently observed on the first day of the week.*

BESIDE the profession of brotherly love, among the people of God, in the ordinances of worship, and especially in the Lord's supper, on the first day of the week, they likewise shewed their love one to another in their own supper, that same night wherein they came together to eat the Lord's supper. This is the *agapæ*, or the feasts of charity †, which were common meals, wherein the poor and rich did eat and drink together, intended for the refreshment of the poor, and cultivating brotherly love among the believers of Christ's resurrection, conversing familiarly together of the things concerning him, at these entertainments. This practice took its beginning from that night, wherein the Lord came to his disciples from the dead, and satisfied them of the truth of his resurrection, while he eat familiarly with them ‡; and from thenceforth it continued among them ||, as long as the profession of brotherly love remained in the churches. When divisions prevail-

* If. lviii. 13. 14. & chap. lvi. 1.—8.

† 2 Pet. ii. 13. Jude ver. 12.

‡ Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 41. 42. 43. & 30. 31. Acts x. 41.

|| Acts ii. 46. & xx. 11.

ed in the church of Corinth, they were guilty of a very great abuse, both of the Lord's supper, and this their own supper * ; and that in two respects.

1. They brought their own supper into the church-assembly, and confounded it with the Lord's supper ; so that they scarce made a distinction betwixt this supper and that common meal, their own supper. In opposition to this, the apostle enjoins them to take their own supper at home, or in their own houses †, and not in the assembly for the Lord's supper. For when they confounded his supper with their own, the hungry being tempted to satisfy their hunger with it, and others indisposing themselves for it by a full meal in their own supper, which they took at the same time, they were not looking on it as the remembrance of his death, and so were guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ‡.

2. Their divisions, and want of brotherly love, appeared in their own supper. For, as they who had houses for entertainment, and plenty of meat and drink, despised the church of God, taking their own supper in the assembly for the Lord's supper ; so they shamed the poor who had not, and who were hungry while they had such plenty as might have refreshed their poor brethren with them. While they were thus divided, and without the exercise of brotherly love, they could not discern the Lord's body, the church, in their joint partaking of the Lord's supper, and so eat and drank judgment to themselves, in eating of that bread and drinking of that cup ||, without examining themselves of their brotherly love ; which if they had been doing in the least, they could not have been so divided from their poor brethren in their own supper. In opposition to this, the apostle requires, that the hungry eat their own supper, which he calls them to take at home, or in the house, in opposition to the assembly for the Lord's supper †. And thus, if by our own supper, in that passage, the apostle be intending the feasts of charity, he is so far from laying them aside, that he is enjoining the right use of them. Accordingly such feasts continued among the people of God, agreeably to this regulation laid down by the apostle, till

* 1 Cor. xi. 20. 21.

† 1 Cor. xi. 22. compared with Acts ii. 46.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 27.

|| 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29.

† 1 Cor. xi. 22. 34.

the fourth century, when the profession of brotherly love was destroyed in the churches, by the introduction of the world into them.

Some would plead from the account we have of the corruptions of the church in Corinth, against what has been said concerning the people of God to whom the sabbatism is left, and for the treading of the outer court of the Lord's house under foot of the nations. But they are not observing, that the Corinthians became Christians, and were brought into church-order, only by the power of the gospel, and its influence on their minds *; and that their divisions, with the slackness of their discipline, and this abuse of the Lord's supper, and the feasts of charity, could not presently unchurch them, unless they persisted in these things against the apostle's admonition, which the second epistle shews us they did not †.

If then we would be indeed followers of the first Christians, we must follow them in their reformation, according to the word of the apostles, and not in the things from which they were reformed by that word. The apostle, it is true, calls them carnal, on account of their divisions, from which this abuse of the Lord's supper flowed; but still he speaks to them as unto babes in Christ ‡, as believers made so by the power of the Lord in the ministry of the gospel ||. And as this abuse of the Lord's supper was a grievous sin, that real believers might fall into, so the apostle, when rebuking them for it, in hope of their reformation, does not so much as suppose them to be unbelievers; nor doth he indeed, in this passage, so much as once suppose the case of an unbeliever partaking of the Lord's supper: for he gives this account of the judgment of the Lord against them that eat and drank unworthily, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world **."

But it is now time to bring these miscellaneous reflections to a close. We have seen, that, when man's first rest with God was broken by the entrance of sin, and when Israel's rest with God, in the promised land, is done away together with the seventh day, there remaineth, and is left to the

* 1 Cor. iii. 6. 9.

† 2 Cor. ii. 1.—11. & vii. 6.—16.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 1. || 2 Cor. iii. 5. 6. 9.

** 1 Cor. xi. 32.

people of God, a promise in the New Testament, of entering into the rest of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the first day of the week, on which the Son of God ceased from his works, and entered into his rest, as God rested from his works on the seventh day, is left in the New Testament, together with that promise, to the people of God, to be observed by them as a sabbath, or a day of rest. We have said something of him who is entered into his rest, of the works he finished, and of his ceasing from them. We have considered his rest, as a divine rest, and the entrance we have into his rest, by faith. We have given some account of the people of God, to whom this sabbatism is left, and of whom the people of Israel were the type and example. We have observed their practice, in the keeping of this day of rest that is left to them, from the beginning, as far as the New Testament points it out to us, and likewise the import of their keeping their own sabbath-day. What remains then, but that we should keep this day of rest, studying to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the example of Israel's unbelief?

PRE-

PREDESTINATION IMPUGNED and DEFENDED, in two Letters, the first impugning, the second defending that doctrine.

L E T T E R I.

[From the *Weekly Miscellany*, April 14. 1739, as reprinted in the *Scots Magazine* for April that year.]

A Discourse on Predestination, which is still professedly maintained by several of our Dissenters, and likely to spread at present amongst the ignorant people of the church of England by the means of some enthusiasts lately risen up in this kingdom.

Mr HOOKER,

THE doctrine of *absolute predestination*, and *irrespective reprobation*, is an objection to God's impartiality. That God should, as some assert, out of mankind, fallen and beheld in an equal degree of demerit, give his Son to die for the redemption of some of them, and those a small part, and leave the rest without a Redeemer; that, antecedent and without any respect to what they can, or shall do, he has determined some of them to be eternally happy, and some to be as eternally wretched; that accordingly he gives so much grace to the former, that they cannot miss of heaven, and so little to the latter, that they cannot possibly attain it: this is a scheme of doctrine entirely irreconcilable with the divine impartiality; but then it is also irreconcilable with reason, our natural notions of God, plain passages of scripture, and is only supported by broken fragments and texts of the Bible considered by themselves, without regard to their context and true meaning, misunderstood and misapplied, and therefore cannot be true.

Our natural notions of the Deity are those of a wise, good, and just being; the maker, the preserver of men; who shews his good will to all his creatures, and delights in communicating existence, and the benefits of it! Now, Reason says, such a being cannot be fanciful, cannot be hard, cannot be injurious. He who made all men, cannot but love all men, so long as they endeavour alike to please and obey him. God is a sovereign, but not an earthly one, surrounded with prejudice, ignorance, error, humour, or weakness. We bless his almighty power, because it delights not in doing mischief, because it is sweetened with mercy, regulated by justice, directed by wisdom. Can such a being shew unequal favour, or unequal severity, to objects that are alike? Can he love a man for doing what he could not help doing, or hate a man for doing what he could not but do? Is it the part of wisdom, is it the part of equity, to make a difference in creatures, alike the objects of his wrath or mercy? Is it goodness, is it justice, to bring a person into being without his consent, without allowing him a possibility of making himself easy, without a possibility of avoiding wretchedness, and that for ever? How could a creature deserve to be put into such circumstances, before he existed? How then could God place him in them, when he did not deserve it, unless he delights in shewing his power, at the expense of all his other perfections? This is the idea of a sovereign tyrant, not of a wise, a good, a just, a perfect God. But perhaps it will be said, "These are depths too great for shallow reason to fathom: *Who art thou that repliest against God?* Search the scriptures, and see what revelation has discovered in this matter." Let us search them, then.

Here we find God represented as a master; but not an hard one, *gathering where he has not strowed, or reaping where he has not sown*; but requiring of every man, and *accepting every man, according to what he has, and not according to what he has not*. We behold him as a Sovereign, different in his administrations, but always just and good: putting mankind under various dispensations, the Jew under a law, the Gentile under nature; but then taking account and judging them accordingly, the Jew by his law, the other without it. We see him figured out as a Father, tender, compassionate, declaring he delights not in the death of him that dies, setting life and death before men, courting them to the one, deterring them from the other, and weeping

weeping over those who would not be persuaded to be happy. 'The sacred page sets before us God so full of love and mercy to mankind, that he sent his only begotten Son, to the intent, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Does the scripture confine the benefit of this Redeemer to a few? No, but quite otherwise says, *that he died for all; that God laid on him the iniquity of us all.* The apostle to the Romans puts this beyond dispute, where he teaches, that as the gift of God in Christ in some things exceeded the offence of Adam, so in nothing it fell short of it: And therefore, as this brought judgment on all men, *so the free gift of life through Christ came upon all men: for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* As therefore, if man had kept his integrity, every one would have had it in his power to please God; so by the gift of Christ every one must have it too: since the consequences of redemption extended full as wide, as those of Adam's transgression; that is, to all men. These are plain passages of holy scripture, which represent to us an universal God and Father of all, an universal Redeemer of mankind, the offers of life and death made to every one of them; and, consequently, a possibility of attaining the one, and escaping the other in every one; unless we can suspect God of practising the greatest mockery and derision to his creatures, as well as injustice.

I proceed to examine the passages brought in support of the contrary opinion, and shew the misinterpretation and wrong application of them. And, previous to this, I must lay down a rule or two necessary to be observed in explaining passages of scripture, if we have not a desire to be deceived. One is, to consider the occasion, connection, and drift of the place in question, and give it the meaning proper to the argument the writer is engaged in. Another is, to resolve difficult and doubtful texts by plain and certain ones. If in these lights we examine the 29th and 30th verses of the 8th chapter to the Romans, we shall find scripture consistent with itself and reason, in this point, as well as in all others. The apostle, in this chapter, as almost all through the epistle, sets himself to prove, that the distinction of Jew and Gentile was now ceased; that other nations had an equal share in the Messiah, with the Jewish; that, in order to have the benefit of Christ, faith was necessary, and obedience to the new co-

venant; but not circumcision or other legal performances, as the Jews contended; who would allow the offers of the gospel to be made to none till they became Jews; and those who would not comply with them in this matter, they persecuted and afflicted; and the Gentile Christians by this means were distressed and contumeliously used, even to death. To convince the Jews of their error, and beat them out of that fond conceit, that they were the only people of God; and to comfort the suffering Gentiles, he tells them, that God had attested his acceptance of the Gentile converts by the gifts of his Spirit to them: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God:— and if sons, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.* The way to this glory is this present state of suffering: “I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” We shall be delivered in God’s good time, and shall be comforted above our affliction. We hope for this deliverance, and pray for it. But, in this case, as in all others, “the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God;” who knows better than we ourselves, what is good for us, and therefore has sent you these present afflictions, to make you more glorious and more happy by your behaviour under them. *For we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose; that is, whom he has called to this state of affliction and suffering for the sake of the gospel, according to his design of putting those into the post of danger, who, he foresaw, would be able to stand it: and whom he did thus foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, viz. in suffering for him and like him, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, the captain of salvation made perfect through suffering.* Moreover, *whom he did predestinate for this purpose of suffering for the gospel at that time, them he also called to it; and whom he called, them he also, upon their good behaviour under afflictions, justified; that is, acquitted, received into favour; and whom he thus justified and approved, them he also glorified; that is, rewarded with the triumphs of his grace in this life, and, if they persevere in duty, will give them glory in the other.* Here is an account

count of some who were foreseen fit for suffering for religion, who therefore were destined for that office, called to it, acquitted for their good behaviour in it, and rewarded for it. Not a syllable appears, that can give the least support to the doctrine of an absolute determination of any man to happiness or misery, without his having the power to obtain the one, or avoid the other. It is the condition of all mankind, to be called to some sort of duty and station in life. Whom God foresees fit for one, according to his purpose of governing and conducting the affairs of the world, he predestines and calls to it, and acquits and rewards them for behaving well in it. An eye, tinged with the rigid predestinarian tenets, can read the whole scheme in every word of this paragraph, and dream of secret purposes, hidden wills, inward efficacious calls; and what not? but an unprejudiced reader will see nothing of all this, nor will suffer a meaning to be drawn out of it, inconsistent with the apostle's declaration in the verse almost immediately following, that God *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; therefore not for a few only, whom he predestinated, happen what will, to eternal life.

Having done with this chapter, proceed we to the next, the 9th to the Romans, which has been thought to contain many passages in favour of the doctrine I am overthrowing: but, upon examination, we shall find they are just as little to the purpose, as that I have already explained. The apostle begins the chapter with good wishes and hearty desires for his countrymen the Jews, and mentions some of their privileges, *the adoption, the glory of God in their temple, the covenants, the law, the service of God, the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came*. But he bids them not be vain of all this, or trust in it: for the promise, as far as it was a promise of salvation and eternal life, was not to all Abraham's seed, or indeed to any barely for descending from him; but to the seed of his faith, those that were like him in goodness, whether Jew or Gentile. For so he expressly says, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of promise are counted for the seed." Then he proceeds to instruct them, not to think it hard, that God now for their sins rejected the Jews from being his people, and chose other nations in their stead, to the like honour: for to raise or de-

press

prefs a people, outwardly to favour and prosper the inhabitants of one country, and not those of another, was the undoubted prerogative of the great Sovereign of the world, without any injury, and therefore without any ground of complaint to any man, beheld in the whole of his existence. Thus he once selected the Jewish people under one covenant, and now he chuses others, with whom to place his name, and to whom to reveal himself; not determining one to damnation, or the other to salvation upon any other terms, than those of having, or wanting faith and obedience. If God was at liberty to adopt the Jewish nation, why is he not at liberty now to adopt another to like or greater privileges? For consider, says the apostle, “when Rebecca had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth), it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” In this passage two things are certain: First, that by Jacob and Esau we cannot understand their persons, but the nations descended from them; secondly, that *loved* and *hated*, here, does not mean the one to be saved, and the other damned; but one to be outwardly favoured in this life, and the other not so; that is, that one should command, and the other obey him. The reason for the first observation is plain: because what was said of them, was not true of them in their own persons; for Esau never served Jacob, that we read of: but it was true of the nations descended from them; for the posterity of Esau did serve the posterity of Jacob, till at the time foretold he shook his yoke from him: agreeably to what the Lord said to Rebecca, inquiring why the children struggled within her, “Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

Since then it is certain, we are to understand by Jacob and Esau, in this place, not their single persons, but the nations sprung from them; it is also equally certain, that the words *loved* and *hated*, here, do not imply the one to be eternally saved, or the other eternally damned; but only, that the one should bear rule, and be more favoured than the other, in the present life. For, since by Esau we must

must mean the Edomites sprung from him, will any one in his wits say, that all the Edomites were damned? and, since by Jacob is meant the Jews derived from him, a man must be still as much out of his wits to assert, that all the Jews were eternally saved. And yet both these assertions must be maintained by him, who interprets *loved* and *bated* in this text, as relating to the future states of heaven and hell. Since, then, the sense I have given to Jacob being *loved* and Esau *bated*, can be the only true one, the meaning of this often objected passage is no more than this, That when Rebecca was with child of twins, Esau and Jacob, before the children were born, or had done good or evil, God said to her, “The descendents of Jacob shall bear rule, and be “more honoured in this life, than the descendents of “Esau.” And this he told her before they were born, that God’s raising the Jewish nation to greatness, and depressing the Edomites, might appear to be by virtue of his prerogative; and that his purpose of electing this people to execute his designs, and not the other, might stand; not of works, for one people was not better than the other; but of God, who was pleased, for his own secret reasons, to call the one his people, and not the other. For in such cases, of bestowing outward favours and revelations of himself, God is accountable to none; but *will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion*, as he told Moses with respect to his choice of the Jewish people. So, then, it was not Esau’s running and crying for the blessing, which could entail it on his posterity: for God was pleased antecedently to shew mercy on the descendents of Jacob, and raise them above the other; which he might do, for wise reasons, which we have no right to inquire into.

The apostle goes on to tell the Jews, that hardness of heart had happened to them for their sins and unbelief: that this also was the undoubted privilege of God, to remove the light from those who shut their eyes, and harden them who went on to harden themselves: that in this case, *as he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, so whom he will, he hardeneth*. When men have sinned themselves out of God’s favour, and made themselves ripe for judgment and punishment, God will in anger sometimes defer the execution, suffering them in the mean time to go on in wickedness, that his justice on impenitent sinners may more signally appear. Thus he did to Pharaoh and his nation:

nation : he had hardened his heart against many messages and many plagues, till at last he made himself ripe for destruction. But God was then pleased to keep him a little longer alive, that his punishment might be more evident in the destruction of him and his people in the Red sea. "I had determined" (says God) "to destroy thee and thy people with the pestilence ; for ye had deserved, and I had resolved your death : but *I raised thee up from that bed of sickness for this very purpose, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*" This the apostle intimates to be the case of the Jews, who had sinned themselves out of God's favour, and deserved his anger long before he poured it on them ; but he *endured them with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that he might make his power more clearly discerned, and might take that opportunity of making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory,* even the Gentiles, whom he called to be his church and people. The murmuring Jews reply, "If this be the case, if we are cast off from being God's people, because he hardens us ; *why doth he yet find fault ? for who hath resisted his will ?*" The apostle answers such a bold questioning of the ways of Providence in the disposal of its favours in this life, in its chusing this, and rejecting that people, with great indignation, and a passage out of one of their prophets, *Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour ?* That is, Hath not God power to raise one nation to the honour of being called his people, and reject another from being so, when they grow unworthy that name ? That this is the meaning of the passage ; and that by *vessel* we are to understand, not a single person, but a nation ; and by *honour* and *dishonour*, outward privileges and advantages in this world ; is plain from Jer. xviii. whence this allusion of the potter is taken. For thus it stands there : The prophet went by God's order to the potter's house, who wrought a work on the wheels, and the vessel that he made of clay, was marred in the hand of the potter, so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to him. Then the word of the Lord came to the prophet, saying, *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter ?*

ter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. What follows there, confirms this explication, where God says, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, to pull it down, if it turn and repent, I also will change my purpose: and when I speak of building a nation, if it do evil, I will not benefit them." The full import of the passage, then, is no more than this: That mankind are in the hand of God, as the lump of clay in the potter's; as he can frame out of that a vessel of more or less honourable use, so can God out of mankind make nations with more or less privileges: and as, when the vessel designed for honour becomes marred in the turning, the potter can apply it to another form; so, when a nation, favoured and privileged, has rendered itself unworthy such honour, God can dispose it in a less advantageous manner.

These are the principal scriptures brought to prove, that God, with respect to another life, has had no regard to what men could do, or have done; but has chosen some men to be happy for ever, antecedent to their birth, and reprobated some to be miserable for ever, and that before they were born; so that it never was in the power of the one to be saved, or the other to be damned. But these texts appear to have no such meaning; and therefore this doctrine is not founded in, but is contrary to plain passages of scripture, as well as reason: and, consequently is not true; and, therefore, cannot be made an objection to the divine impartiality; which I have been contending for. — Yours, &c.

L E T T E R II.

Addressed to the Author of the preceding Discourse.

[From the *Scots Magazine*, November 1739.]

S I R,

Edinburgh, June 13. 1739.

THE complaint in the title of your discourse surprised me a little, when I reflected, that the *predestination*, which is *still maintained by several Dissenters, and likely to spread among the ignorant of the church of England by means of some lately risen enthusiasts*, must be much the same that is professed in the articles of the church, and subscribed by her clergy. This should be the doctrine of the church, if she have any doctrine; and can it be, that no body in the church holds it, but those lately risen enthusiasts, and the ignorant people that hearken to them?

One who views this doctrine in the light wherein you represent it, with the character it gives of the Deity, would need a great deal of charity to make him think well of the English clergy, who have subscribed articles containing a scheme of doctrine *entirely irreconcilable with the divine impartiality, with reason, our natural notions of God, and with plain passages of scripture*; a scheme that sets forth God as *delighting in shewing his power, at the expense of all his other perfections, and as a sovereign tyrant, — practising the greatest mockery and derision to his creatures, as well as injustice.*

It is hard to believe, that men of integrity or common honesty would, upon any consideration, subscribe such a horrible scheme, or submit to it, even as a condition of ecclesiastic peace. Certainly these subscribers, many of them wise and good men, must have seen this doctrine in a more favourable light, and looked on it as far more tolerable than you would have it appear; or I cannot say what should be thought of them.

Nor will the learned clergy of England altogether approve

prove of your high assurance, in determining a question in point of reason, that has exercised the wits of the greatest disputers of the world, ancient and modern, Heathen and Christian. The ancient philosophers, who professed to follow reason as their guide, were divided upon the question about liberty and necessity; and so are those men who would now appear entirely devoted to their natural notions of God, against revelation; and the Christian philosophers, both Popish and Protestant, differ upon it in like manner. And would you class all the great reasoners on the side of necessity with your late enthusiasts and ignorants? Or are you confident you have done enough to make all their reasoning appear entirely inconsistent with reason and our natural notions of God?

Your great confidence seems founded on a supposition which could not well be made, at this time of day, by a skilful writer on your subject. You seem to suppose, that your arguments, which, to give them the more force, you put in the form of questions, cannot be turned back upon yourself by your own scheme, which still includes the Creator and his *prescience* and providence. That does not indeed make necessity, but it certainly supposes and takes it in. If you had but thought of a possibility of retorting your questions, about *bringing* such persons *into being*, and *their deserving to be put into such circumstances before they existed*, &c. you would have put them with a little more caution and reserve, and made your inferences touching the divine character in softer and more decent expressions. I might here recommend you to Bayle, not to teach you scepticism, but a little more modesty, as very becoming upon a subject that has hitherto defied human reason to fathom it.

Allow me, after this friendly admonition, to observe, with the like freedom, your way of searching the scriptures, to see what revelation has discovered in this matter.

The rules you lay down, as necessary to be observed by them who would not be deceived, are, 1. *To consider the occasion, connection, and drift of the place in question, and give it the meaning proper to the writer's argument.* 2. *To resolve difficult and doubtful texts by plain and certain ones.*

Very good rules! but I am afraid, the second especially, will be of little use betwixt you and a rigid predestinarian.

For a text that is plain and certain to him, because he thinks it plain on his side of the question, may be difficult and dark to you, as requiring some art to make the words of it ply to your scheme; and therefore you would explain it by texts, plain and certain to you, for the same reason for which they will be difficult and dark to him; whose *eye*, you will say, is *tinged with his rigid predestinarian tenets*; as he, on the other hand, will not fail to tell you, that your eye is tinged with a vain conceit of your own sufficiency, and with the pride of your knowledge and merit; from which, till you be converted, and made as a little child, you shall never truly know the gospel of the grace of God. However this debate end betwixt you and him, I may venture to say, that few of us look into the scriptures with untinged eyes; and till they be cleared, rules for seeing will be useless; but then, needless.

Now, let us see how you observe your own rules. You begin with the character of God, which you give, not from that remarkable passage of the Old Testament where he himself gives it to Moses, which is pointed to by Paul, Rom. chap. ix. nor from any passage of the New Testament that serves expressly to declare or explain that name of God, but from *broken fragments* of a parable and of a passage about acceptable alms: and, after a slight touch on the topic of the sanctions of the divine law, and Jesus's weeping over Jerusalem that was to be destroyed according to the old prophecies, you put the character of God as standing in the relation of a God and Father to all of mankind without any difference, upon the unconfinedness of the benefit of the Redeemer; which you prove by these expressions, *He died for all*, and, *God laid on him the iniquity of us all*: though you cannot be ignorant how the predestinarians would shew, from the connection and drift of these and other such texts, that they cannot be taken to mean all of mankind, but of the elect and the church of every nation of the world and sort of men without difference. And if they could perceive any difficulty or doubtfulness in such texts, they would, according to your rule, resolve them by texts that speak plainly and certainly of a distinction made by Christ's death, according to the divine purpose about it intimated beforehand in the prophecies, and of the redemption of a peculiar people out of every nation, for whom Christ prays, as he does not for the world: and they will be sure to tell you, if your eye were not deeply tinged,
you

you could not but see this distinction carried from the third chapter of Genesis throughout the scripture to the end of the Revelation, and behold a beautiful consistency betwixt the universal expressions and the particular.

But you are positive, "the apostle to the Romans puts
 " this beyond dispute, where he teaches, that as the gift
 " of God in Christ in some things exceeded the offence
 " of Adam, so in nothing it fell short of it: and therefore,
 " as this brought judgment on all men, so the free gift of
 " life through Christ came upon all men: for, as in Adam
 " all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. As therefore,
 " if man had kept his integrity, every one would have had
 " it in his power to please God; so, by the gift of Christ,
 " every one must have it too: since the consequences of
 " redemption extended full as wide as those of Adam's
 " transgression, *i. e.* to all men."

This will put the predestinarians in mind of your complaint against them for *supporting their doctrine by broken fragments and texts of the Bible considered by themselves, without regard to their context and true meaning*; and they will be ready here to turn it against yourself. They will alledge you give an idea of the consequences of Adam's transgression, and of redemption, that could not come originally from the apostle's words, or the drift of the place. Whatever dispute may be about these consequences, one thing is plain and certain in the text, that *death* is the consequence of Adam's transgression, and *eternal life* the consequence of redemption. And the words of 1 Cor. chap. xv. that you join to the words of this text, serve to let us see, that it is life from the dead. But that whole chapter to the Corinthians speaks of no other resurrection but that of the just, and plainly restricts the *all*, who are to be *made alive in Christ as they died in Adam*, to them *that are Christ's*, who, as they have borne the image of the earthly man, shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now, if death be the consequence of Adam's offence, and eternal life from the dead the consequence of redemption; then, by your argument, the resurrection unto life eternal through Christ, must come upon all them upon whom death passed through Adam. The consequence of the offence was not a mere possibility of dying, but certain and unavoidable death, even on *them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; and if the gift of righteousness by Jesus Christ bring no more but a possibility of attaining life
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from the dead, this will be one *thing* very remarkable wherein the gift of *Christ* falls short of the offence of Adam; and yet the apostle is declaring how much more efficacious it is to those to whom it extends, in these same words from which you draw your argument, "If by one man's offence," or one offence, "death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ." What does he mean by this limitation, "they which receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness," while he is shewing how far the gift exceeds the offence? He delights to speak universally, in opposition to the Jewish limitation; but he always takes care to debar your universality, equally opposite to the freedom and abundance of the gift with the Jewish restriction.

Having finished your scripture-proofs with a reproach on the divine character, if it should not answer to this your draught, you next come to answer objections from two passages of scripture.

The first is Rom. viii. 29. 30. where you make the word *foreknow* your key to open the whole, taking this *foreknowledge* to signify no more but bare *foresight*; without noticing how the predestinarians compare this text with 1 Pet. i. 20. where this word is taken to signify *foreordaining*, as importing more than speculation. Then, for *foreknowing them*, you put, *foreseeing their fitness for suffering*. But the text says, *he did foreknow them*, even as it says, *he did predestinate them conformed to the image of his Son*, and *called them*, and *justified them*, and *glorified them*. The predestinarians, you know, observing the common use of the word *knowledge* and of *foreknowledge* in scripture, take God's *foreknowledge* to be *the counsel of his will*, according to which he worketh all, Eph. i. 11. and they take it for his gracious eye and preventing regard to them, who did not first chuse or love him independently of his purpose, but he them. And when he predestinated them conformed to his Son in the state of suffering, this conformity to which they are predestinated, must take in likeness to him in the disposition and fitness for suffering, and in their behaviour under it: and further, they insist upon it, that those who are foreknown and predestinated to this state, are, according to the text, most certainly glorified without exception or reserve. Now, it was your business to make

all this appear false, otherwise than by telling them of their ringed eyes.

Your sense of the passage comes to this: "Here is an account of some who were foreseen fit for suffering for religion, who therefore were destined for that office, called to it, acquitted for their good behaviour in it, and rewarded for it, *i. e.* with the triumphs of grace in this life, and, if they persevered in duty, with glory in the other."

Thus you, 1. ascribe their being destined to the office of suffering for Christ, and like him, unto their ability and fitness for this, foreseen. But I am afraid it will take great stretching to reconcile this to the putting of Paul himself in the post of greatest danger, or to his ways of speaking upon his own case, or even to these words of his to suffering Christians, *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*

2. You ascribe their being justified, to their good behaviour in their suffering state; and take no notice how the apostle in the context ascribes it to Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession. If you mean the same thing with him in this epistle on justification, I dare say your choice of words to express it is vastly different. 3. You seem to make the perseverance of the justified elect uncertain, and loose the connection betwixt justification and the reward; against an express affirmation in the text, and against the apostle's assertions in the following words, to the end of the chapter. He makes the victory certain through him that loved them, and speaks the certainty of their perseverance in his love in the strongest terms imaginable, and that by way of inference from God's *forknowing them*.

However your manner of expression may differ from Paul's, as one of our countrymen said, he differed only in words from his minister, when being asked, What is sin? he answered, Saving grace; your sense is the same, by the following words, *God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; which you would have to be all of mankind; without any regard to the whole context, which, too plainly for you, fixes this all to God's elect and the predestinated. And the *all things* that God gives with his Son, must be those great things of which the apostle had been speaking, as free and unmerited by us as the gift of his Son.

As to Rom. chap. ix. you first notice, that the apostle
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sets himself against the boasting of the Jews, by shewing them, that "the promise, as far as it was a promise of salvation and eternal life, was only to the seed of Abraham's faith, — whether Jew or Gentile." Then you allow sovereignty, as the prerogative of God, in bestowing temporal privileges, and preferring one people or nation to another. But here you lose sight of your first purpose, touching the promise to the true Israel, as it is a promise of eternal life. And when you speak of sovereignty with respect to nations and bodies of men, I cannot see how the whole of any one man's existence comes in as a salvo: for I suppose your vessels, the nations, exist only in this present world; and I hope you are not saying, that God is the great Sovereign of this world only, and not of the next world.

However, you allow as much sovereignty as any predestinarian can desire, in the choice (shall I say?) of the typical Israel. But then, far aside from this purpose, you talk of hardening, as the punishment of sin, without the least occasion for it in your text; yea, by this you cut off all occasion for that objection, which comes immediately against it, *Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?* which it behoved you to repel by sovereignty; yet still holding by your foresaid distinction, and laying the whole stress of your defence on the sense of the word *vessels*; which you must have to signify, not single persons, (as Paul, or as those mentioned 2 Tim. ii. 20. 21.), but *nations*; and you will have *honour* and *dishonour*, only to respect outward, *i. e.* national privileges and advantages in this world. And even here again, your bias carries you from the point of sovereignty, and sways you to prove, by the text in Jeremiah, merit or demerit, as to the disposal of nations with respect to national honour or dishonour.

But, unhappily for you, the very next words of the apostle determine most plainly and certainly the sense of the word *vessels*. His words are, — "The vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory; even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the nations; as he saith also in Osee," &c. Were these vessels nations! And what were their national privileges? Or does not the apostle look upon these (the small remnant of the Jewish nation, together with them of every other nation who believed on Christ for righteousness) as the seed of Abraham's faith, unto whom the promise was, as it is a promise of salvation and eternal life? And does he
not

not shew, that these were pointed out beforehand in the prophecies as the people of God, whom he would save by the faith of Christ; while the bulk of the Jewish people were cut off from that salvation, and fell short of the right to eternal life, through their stumbling at Christ, who was before appointed as a stumbling-stone and rock of offence to them?

You would vindicate God, by denying this fact, plainly enough asserted by Paul; who, at the same time, rejects with the greatest indignation the inferences from it that you allow, and justifies God. And by comparing what he says for him, Rom. ix. 20.—23. and xi. 33.—36. with your vindication, it may appear which of you have most studied the glory and honour of the Deity.

I am, &c.

REMARKS ON Dr BENSON'S DOCTRINE OF PRE- DESTINATION reviewed.

[Never before printed.]

[Dr Benson says, "That Beverovicus a learned physician would
"not practise physic till he should know whether the end of mens
"lives was unalterably fixed." This introduces the remarks.

Beverovicus might have practised the art of physic, though he had been satisfied that the end of mens lives was unalterably fixed. He could not propose by that art to make their lives without end. And supposing the time of the end unalterably fixed and determined, he could not know but the recovery of patients by his practice was as unalterably determined as the continuance of their lives to their fixed ends. For did that learned physician suppose, in the question about which he wanted satisfaction, that the end of mens lives might be fixed without fixing the means whereby they should be continued to that end, and without determining the means of bringing them to that same end? The practice of physic has, in fact, served to both these purposes; and men have been as effectually both cured and killed by practisers who have held the side of necessity in this question, as by those who take the side of liberty. We shall charitably say for both sides, that their great design and chief study in practising that honourable and profitable art is the recovery of the sick. And, with respect to that, this same learned doctor could not possibly know but his practice might be the same thing to the recovery of his patients ordained to recover, as the sailors abiding with Paul in the ship, was to the saving of all the lives in that ship. And his practice might have the same sort of certain connection with the recovery of a patient ordained to longer life, that Paul's keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection had with his not being a reprobate in the judgment. It was unalterably fixed, that there should be no loss of life, but of the ship; but this was in certain connection with the sailors abiding in the ship, which was as unalterably determined. And it was in like manner fixed, that Paul, whom nothing present or to come could separate from God's love in Christ Jesus,

Jesus, should not be a reprobate in the judgment; but this was in firm connection with his keeping under his body, which was as unalterably fixed as the other. As therefore it might have been said to Beverovicus, very agreeably to the fixed side of the question, that if he did not practise the art of physic, some mens lives would be thortened; he might have set himself to practise that art, without being satisfied on the other side of the question. But the case of a man induced to practise that art by being satisfied in this question, may be looked on as somewhat extraordinary.

And much like this was the case of that learned divine Dr Benson. He also wanted to be satisfied, whether the actions of men and their final state were unalterably fixed. And this he wanted on a twofold account. The first is, to regulate his own actions, if free, and prepare himself for happiness, if decreed conditionally; or, if otherwise, to acquiesce in what was not to be resisted or avoided.

But, though his actions were as unalterably fixed as their connection with his final state; this could make no difference as to his regulating his actions, unless he were also satisfied to what actions he was unalterably determined; which he could never be, on that supposition, till the actions were done. And so it was the same thing to his regulating his actions, whether these actions and his final state had been unalterably fixed by his creator or not. He says, on the other hand, if they should be so fixed, he wanted to acquiesce, as as much possible, in what could not be resisted. And this still supposes him to know what is absolutely decreed concerning his actions and final state; or, wherein would he acquiesce? Yea, he proposes a liberty of acquiescing, where he supposes not liberty. For how could he in that case acquiesce, except it were determined, that he should certainly do so? We see men full as careful about working out their own salvation, who are persuaded, it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, as Dr Benson can be, who is satisfied, his will is free from any necessity arising from a divine decree about his actions. However free he thought himself, in seeking to be satisfied about this question, the true consequence of it is, in fact, his being a professed adversary to absolute predestination, as we see he is in his review. And whether he by this is prepared for happiness or misery, before his lawgiver and judge; a predestinarian will say, he has been appointed to it by his Creator and Sovereign Lord.

In the next place, he wanted to be satisfied, by this inquiry, if his undertaking the care of souls would be to any purpose; seeing it could answer no end to persuade such as have no power, nor could do any thing but what they did, as chained down to one course of action by an irreversible decree; in which case, arguments and motives, &c. could avail nothing.

It seems then he set himself to the sacred work of the ministry, knowing this, that those of whose souls he undertook the care, had power to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and their neighbour as themselves, and so to live. For, if he knew they had not power to do this, he could not propose to persuade them to it. He could not in this case say to his hearers as the Lord said to the Jewish lawyer, inquiring how he should regulate his actions to prepare himself for happiness, "This do, and thou shalt live." For he concluded, this could answer no end, if they had not power. And surely he could not propose to set aside this condition of life, and teach his people to prepare themselves for happiness without regard to it.

But even in persuading men to prepare themselves for happiness in his own way, he concluded it would be to no purpose, if they could not do any thing but what they did, as chained down to one course of action by an irreversible decree.

Yet supposing men chained down to one course of action, if persuasion, with arguments and motives, be a link of that chain; it must, in that case, be to very certain purpose. For would Dr Benson's persuasions be to no purpose, would they answer no end, if they were irresistibly decreed as the means to the end of bringing some men into a course of good actions, and fixing them in that course? And as he could not know but this might be the case, he might even have set himself to the work of the ministry upon this same supposition, as many successful ministers had done before him. He might have encouraged himself as the Lord did, when he said, *All that the Father hath given to me, shall come unto me.* He might have set himself to that work in the view expressed by Paul in these words, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.* And 2 Tim. ii. 25.

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The Doctor makes the question, about which he wanted to be satisfied, the same with this, Whether the scripture-texts, speaking of this subject, be to be understood literally or figuratively? If understood literally, he cannot then endeavour to regulate his own actions, nor can he undertake the care of souls; but if figuratively, then he may set himself, to prepare for happiness, and persuade others to do so with hope of success.

Here we have a tacit acknowledgment, that the letter of the scripture-texts on this subject is against him. But by his study for satisfaction on this question, he has found out the sense of those texts which speak figuratively, to be only for conditional decrees. And this is to be made out of a long discourse, that takes up the greatest part of his review, serving to instruct us in this point, that when God condescends to our capacity, speaking of himself to us after the manner of men, we are not for this to think of any imperfection in him. And so, when his foreknowledge, and decrees, and his counsel, and purpose, are spoken of and represented as recorded in a book, we are by no means to ascribe the defects and imperfections of mens consultations and resolutions unto the all-perfect Deity. So likewise says every predestinarian. And they that contend for absolute decrees think this makes for their purpose. But what must be the Doctor's inference from all his discourse on this subject? Why, this must be inferred from it, or nothing to his point, That God's decrees, concerning the actions of men, and their final state, cannot be absolute, but must be only conditional. Yet it will take a much longer discourse than all the review to make out this inference, or even to shew, that the letter of the scripture, that speaks of God's decrees as if they were absolute, yet means, when figuratively understood, that they are not absolute, but conditional.

He would next make somewhat to his purpose out of this, that the phrases of the New Testament on this subject are borrowed from the Old, speaking of the Jews as chosen and separated to God, from the rejected Gentiles who served idols, and calling them the sons of God, &c.; and these phrases are applied to the church of the New Testament, consisting of as many Jews, and also Gentiles, as believed in Christ, distinguished from the unbelievers.

This might say something, if he could make it appear, that the election of the Old Testament, the figure of that of the New, was conditional. But where shall we find evidence

dence for this? Shall we begin at Abraham, and say, that he was chosen, and called from among the servers of other gods, because he was not serving these gods? We cannot say this without expressly contradicting Joshua, chap. xxiv. 2. Shall we next say, that the election of Jacob to be heir of the land of promise, and the rejection of Esau from that, before they were born or had done good or evil, was only conditional? And what then was the condition? And then let Moses tell us what was the condition of the election of Jacob's family, from among all the families of the earth, to be God's holy nation and peculiar people; let him tell for what excellency in them God loved them beyond other people, Deut. vii. 6. 7. 8. & ix. 4. 5. 6.

If then we must understand the New Testament speaks of the election of the true Israel by what the Old said of the election of Israel after the flesh; that election is clearly not at all conditional. And this is all the light he has brought us to let us see, that the scriptures, figuratively understood, speak only of conditional decrees.

He allows that absolute decrees are very agreeable in some cases to the divine perfection: for he says, concerning the inanimate parts of the creation, his decrees are absolute. And he owns, they are so absolute, that we cannot assign any condition as to the circumstances of our life, the constitution of our body, and peculiar turn of mind. And yet it is undeniable, that, by that same constitution of body, and peculiar turn of mind, together with the circumstances we are placed in, we are chained down to a course of actions that have a connection with our final state.

But he still contends, that God's decrees are not absolute with respect to intelligent agents, by this reason, that it would destroy their constitution, and treat them like stocks or stones, that have no understanding or agency at all, — a thing which infinite wisdom can never do.

This is fine reasoning! If God should determine an intelligent agent to act according to that understanding, this would make him without understanding and action as a stone. Thus if God, as governor and judge, punished the Jews by hardening them in unbelief, so that they could not believe, or if he sent strong delusion on the professors of Christianity, that they might believe a lie, and be damned, because they received not the love of the truth; then he deluded them, he hardened them, in that case, into stocks and stones, that they might have no understanding
nor

nor agency at all: and these hardened Jews, these Anti-christian apostates, under the energy of error sent on them, could then no more do any fault, than stocks or stones, that have no understanding or agency at all. And the same thing may be said of the angels that fell, delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.

Yea, on the other hand, God himself, for whom it is impossible to do evil, being necessarily good by his infinite perfection; Jesus Christ, who was ordained before the world to be without spot, and so could not sin; the elect angels, who cannot fall; the children of God, who cannot sin unto death; and the saints in heaven, who cannot sin at all, being all, one way or other, necessitated to good, and chained up from evil, are no more intelligent agents than stocks or stones!

By these means he arrives at his conclusion, with the help of a distinction, giving us a twofold view of God. He says, what the most rigid predestinarian will heartily allow, "That God may be considered in two different views, viz. a Creator, original Proprietor, and Lord of all; or as their moral Governor and Judge." In the first of these views, he allows God, as Sovereign Lord and original Proprietor of all, to appoint our constitution of body and peculiar turn of mind, with the circumstances of our life, with perfect wisdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our sight, or by no methods of proceeding that we are acquainted with. This is the same thing that the predestinarians mean by absolute decrees: and in this first view, and this view only, they ascribe to the all-perfect Deity such decrees concerning the actions and final state of men.

In the second of these views, when we consider God as our governor and judge, all his decrees are conditional; being the same with his clearly revealed and perfectly well known laws, and his just judgment according to them. And in this view of God none of the predestinarians ever saw absolute decrees concerning the actions and final state of men. But they consider, that it is the same God, who is both Sovereign Lord and Judge, and that he shews himself in both views in his supernatural work of redemption, as well as in his work of creation and natural providence. And they will affirm with this doctor, that all election and reprobation of God, as governor and judge, must be conditional, or that all conditional election and reprobation must be ascribed to him as governor and judge. Nor will they

they differ from him in this, that all election and reprobation, by methods of proceeding that lie quite out of our sight, *i. e.* all absolute election and reprobation, must be ascribed to him as Sovereign Lord and Proprietor of all.

Wherein then lies the difference? Even in this, That Doctor Benson will not have any decree, fixing the actions and final state of men, ascribed to God as Sovereign Lord. And if the letter of the scripture seem to ascribe such decrees to him in that view, it must not be literally understood, but figuratively: for when the texts are figuratively understood, they will be found to ascribe them only to God as Governor and Judge: and so these decrees are all conditional.

He has prepared an examination of the texts relating to this subject, and in the mean time, he has given us a sample of this method of understanding them, in a text or two, whereby we may judge what we are to expect from that examination. The first is Rom. ix. 15. 16. where, answering an objection against the determination of the Sovereign Lord God, with respect to Jacob and Esau, the apostle says, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion; so then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God having mercy." This text, according to his method, is to be understood in "this manner, "He will shew mercy, as he has assured us, "to none but the penitent, and harden none but such as "remain impenitent and incorrigible, after sufficient means "have been tried upon them; and such indeed he leaves "to themselves, as parents abandon hopeless and incorrigible children. And if any man should ask, why he "will not save the wicked, and harden the pious and "well disposed? might he not justly answer, I will shew "mercy to whom I will shew mercy, and whom I see "proper, I will harden or punish?"

This is one instance of understanding the texts relating to this subject, figuratively, and not literally. And here is the other, Rom. ix. 21. — "Hath not the potter power "over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" The Doctor sets aside the letter of this text, and understands it figuratively, thus, "He knows best how to manage the creation, with every individual of it, — much better than
" the

“ the most skilful potter to mold his different lumps of
“ clay.”

In a lately published note on Rom. chap. ix. * it has been observed, how the apostle demonstrates the divine sovereignty from his having mercy on whom he will, as he said to Moses.

But Dr Benson points out to us a God, that has no mercy to shew but to the penitent, the pious, and well-disposed. And upon this it may be inquired, Who was that God, which gave repentance to the Jews, that turned to Christ, after they had been guilty, with the rest of the nation, of crucifying him? Because, the apostle says, Jesus was exalted by God's right hand to give them repentance as well as remission. Or what was God shewing, if it was not mercy, in granting to the Gentiles repentance unto life, when his hand was with them that preached the gospel to them, and many of them believed, and turned to the Lord, and when as many as were ordained to eternal life believed? Or what was it but divine mercy that distinguished Paul from his brethren the Jews, with whom he was blaspheming, and persecuting Christ in ignorance and unbelief? If God shewed mercy, in giving his Son to die for the ungodly, to reconcile enemies to him by his blood, and to redeem thereby to him out of every kindred, tongue, and people, and nation without difference, if he shews mercy in raising them up with Christ from trespasses and sins, through faith of his operation; then let it be told what was the condition of his shewing all this mercy? And what shall be said of the account that is given of God's pardoning mercy, when he is represented as a creditor frankly forgiving two debtors, who had nothing to pay, the one owing but fifty pence, and the other five hundred?

But the Doctor has no notion of this mercy, nor of the God that shews mercy at this rate. He acknowledges no mercy shewed by God, but the respect manifested in judgment to the penitent, the pious, and well-disposed beyond the wicked and impenitent. And perhaps, he acknowledges not that God, before whom there is no standing in judgment without a perfect righteousness. But if God deal better with one than another in the view of his being better, we may call this equity and justice; but it cannot be

* See vol. 2. p. 46.

called mercy, without confounding the sense and use of words, and the nature of things.

If rewarding him that is fit to be rewarded, or more fit than he that is fit for punishment, be mercy; then what shall we call judgment in distinction from mercy?

The object of mercy is the worthless and the miserable. And this mercy cannot be seen in God, viewed only as a lawgiver and judge. It is only to be seen in the view of him as Sovereign Lord. We must therefore either think of God as just without mercy, or we must even submit to unconditional mercy, proceeding in the way of absolute decrees.

Besides the texts that are to be understood figuratively, as speaking literally for absolute decrees, the Doctor has found a text that speaks to him literally against such decrees. And this is that single text that was cited against absolute predestination and grace, in a marginal note, by the author of the discourse on the conversion and apostleship of St Paul, which was already considered in the conclusion of the printed note on Rom. chap. ix. * And beside the hint already given in the beginning of these remarks, I shall now only answer the devilish inference he would make from this text, in the same way that Jesus answered Satan, when he brought scripture to him. Dr Benson would infer, that God's elect may become reprobates, from what is written, 1 Cor. ix. 27. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway or reprobate." And I answer him, it is written again, 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us."

* Vol. 2. p. 55.

OF MR HUTCHINSON'S PHILOSOPHY and DIVINITY.

An extract of a letter, dated March 8. 1759.

[First published in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1759.]

* * * * * You are not so clear about the law of nature, but that you may be *apt to see some force* in such reasoning! yea it seems no material point to you, whether there be any law of nature or not! As by this I am made to understand plainly enough, how you are disposed toward the Hutchinsonian heresy; I think I must be as plain with you, and let you know, as well as I can, how I have been, and still am minded about it.

When I first considered Hutchinson's system of what is called natural philosophy, and his imagination of the motion of the heavenly matter in the actions of fire, light, and air; I thought here is a new world-maker, and a quite new scheme of the workmanship of God, offering to succeed the Newtonian, that had set aside and succeeded former schemes. But whereas there had been some difficulty in reconciling those other schemes to the plain language of the Bible, held sacred in Christendom, and they had rested in this, that the Bible was never designed to teach mankind philosophy; but spake to all men of the works of creation according to the appearance they made to them all: this new scheme of these works pretended, with the utmost confidence, to come with no less authority, than that of express revelation; and Moses, the sacred writer, was in the boldest manner appealed to for the truth and certainty of it.

The question then was, How is this to be seen in Moses, which never man saw in him before? And for this, it was said, that, by a due construction of the language wherein he wrote, it would most evidently appear, though it was not so manifest in any translation. And to pave the way to the right understanding of that language, the LXX. version and Chaldee paraphrase, with helps taken from the Arabic dialect,

dialect, were all so condemned, as nothing brought from these could be admitted, as any objection against the sense Hutchinson thought fit to give any Hebrew word; though without these, or some of them, it had not been possible at this time of day to understand one line of Hebrew.

The next thing was to see, if this new system could appear from this new construction of the Hebrew, so that it might be said to be revealed in the Hebrew Bible. As I attended to this, I found Hebrew words adapted to that new system, even as experiments had been adapted to different and opposite hypotheses and systems of philosophy before; but I could see no such thing as any express revelation of that scheme of God's workmanship. I could not find any thing said by Moses, like the same matter of the heavens going into the action of fire in the orb of the sun, proceeding from thence in the action of light to the bound of the world; and, because there is no void in this whole matter that fills the world, returning to that orb again in the action of air. Nor could I find it any where said in Hebrew words, that this is the made emblem of the Trinity. Nor could it appear to me any where said by Moses, that this same matter, in the action of fire, light, and air, was the *Elohim* worshipped by the oldest idolaters, in place of the invisible *Elohim* represented thereby.

Then observing what sort of divinity was to come out of this new manner of explaining the Hebrew, I found that as there was a labour to adapt several words very fancifully to the philosophy, so was there to adapt the words of Hebrew to this divinity, not altogether so new, but as little founded in the Bible, viz. A Trinity, wherein one Godhead is fitly represented in a mass of matter, and three divine persons fitly exhibited to the view of mankind in three different modifications of that same matter. — A Christ compounded of two persons, the one divine, and the other human; the divine leaving the human to suffer, and so to make the atonement by himself. — An atonement, even a conditional, universal redemption; — with the power of man's will, independent of the divine decree, to fulfil the condition! — A Christian world, or Christendom, not Antichristian! no, not the Roman church; but such as the Mahometan world, the Deists, Arians, Socinians, Quakers, and the low church of England; against whom a spirit of persecution, as violent as ever was in the Roman church,

church, is manifest in the declaration of this whole doctrine.

While I perceived this Hutchinson setting up for an infallible interpreter of the Hebrew language, so that to deny his translations, was much the same as to deny revelation, as well as to cast off common sense; it was very odd to me to see him playing in the most childish manner with Hebrew words. Hoadly, now Bishop of Winchester, being the chief of the low church, and so the main object of his spite, had his name turned into Hebrew letters, which founded *Hodli*; and this is a word of the Bible, signifying *a naughty or vain person*, or some such epithet of reproach. And thus Hoadly is confuted and condemned by revelation! even as it is pointed against the Quakers by one of his disciples, calling them *Zamzummin*. But his account of *Berith* and of *Cherubim*, on which he lays so very much stress, and which is a good sample of his manner of explaining the Hebrew, appeared to me so contrary to all the light I could have from the New Testament as well as the Old, for understanding these words, that I thought it behoved me to be first out of my senses before I could affirm Hutchinson's sense of Hebrew words to be revelation.

You may judge then how it would go down with me, to hear it maintained with great confidence, that there is no knowledge of the eternal power and Godhead, no sense of the being of God, nor of his judgment in man, without this same revelation, viz. the philosophy and divinity which Hutchinson has been adapting to the words of the Hebrew Bible. And you are apt to see the force of reasonings for this; as for example: 1. Because they who had no view of this revelation, could not see the power of God to salvation; they could have no sense of eternal power by the things that are made, nor any dread of destruction from that power. And because they could not see one God in three persons manifested to them in the same matter, moving in three powers, they could not perceive any thing of Godhead, nor know of God at all by his works. And because they knew not the distinguishing character of the true God amidst so many idols and vain imaginations darkening their foolish hearts; there was no such thing as any notice of God from his works in their conscience. 2. Because there are no innate ideas, as Locke saith; therefore there is no instinct in man, distinguishing him from the brutes, whereby he can perceive God in his works of creation,

tion, or be sensible of his judgment and dread his displeasure. And because, as Locke also saith, all our ideas come by our senses, all our knowledge by reflection on our sensations; and it is also manifest, that God teaches us in the scripture by emblems, metaphors, parables, allegories, types, and hieroglyphics; therefore there can be no knowledge of the Deity, without the emblem of divine works, imagined by Hutchinson and described in his Hebrew.

3. Because Deists, and Quakers who have the same meaning with them, hold the light of nature sufficient to guide man to happiness without any revelation, and so it is needless to speak of revelation to them: the only way of confuting and confounding these base pretenders to reason and light within, is to deny the light of nature altogether: and therefore, whosoever maintains that light, however he shew the insufficiency of it, gives up the cause of revelation to these infidels, and supports them against God and his word.

And you are apt to see force in such reasoning! As you would dip a little in philosophy, I dare say you are thus apt to make a curious philosopher. I would have you next consider, if you be apt to see the force of the philosopher's essay to shew, that matter has the power of motion; or if you be apt to see the force of what Locke says for the possibility of matter's thinking, or to be, with him, not clear to deny it: and with this aptness, you will be very fit to sympathize with the poor Gentiles, who had no other *Elohim* but Hutchinson's machine.

The wisdom of the scribe was critical skill in the letter of the Old Testament, and the wisdom of the Greek was what we call philosophy. The world by this wisdom knew not God, and remained ignorant of his character after all their labour in that wisdom. Yea it was not by that wisdom that what is known of God by his works, was manifest in their consciences: for it served to darken their hearts as to that. And shall we now say, that without a way of explaining the Hebrew, now found out to countenance a new scheme of philosophy, we can have no knowledge of God, nor know that there is a God at all?

The Son of God came to manifest his Father's name, whom he said the world knew not; and he did this according to the Old Testament. And while he and his apostles referred always to that, and spake of it as the letter, in a parable, whereof what they declared was the spirit,

rit, and likewise the truth of the prophetic types and figures; did they ever meddle with the explication of Hebrew words to make out the truth of any thing they said from the import of the roots of that language? Or in all the contention they had with the Jews about the interpretation and sense of the Old Testament, did they once blame them for a wrong translation of any word? They made the Trinity known; but this to be understood only in Christ. We have not from them the least hint of a Trinity visible in the heavens, representing the invisible. They made no use of Hutchinson's revelation, in making God the Saviour known, or shewing his character to the world that knew it not: but in declaring it to the Gentiles, that knew the least of it, they always supposed them knowing there was a God, to whom they were accountable (Acts xiv. 15. 16. 17. and chap. xvii. 24. 28.). For they applied themselves to man's conscience, his proper instinct, where this is manifest; and they convinced all men of sin, from the knowledge of God and his law in their consciences, as you may see Paul doing, when you read Rom. i. 19. 20. 32. and chap. ii. 14. 15. The manner of the Hutchinsonians treating these and other scriptures objected to their scheme, is a too manifest evidence, that they have no ear to give to any revelation but that of Hutchinson, and that their faith is nothing else but the belief of that which is as foreign to the light of nature, and to the superadded light that shines into mens hearts from the face of Christ, by the Old and New Testament revelation, as darkness is to the light.

What is known of God, in every man that holds the truth in unrighteousness, is manifest in them all; for God hath shewed it to them by his works; not by any system of philosophy, far less by Hutchinson's imagination of God's works, or his fancies about his words; but by such an appearance as his works make to the conscience of every man that is capable of sin; by which they all understand his eternal power and Godhead. Even the philosophers had this light which cannot be utterly extinguished from the heart of man, however darkened. They knew God and acknowledged not only eternal *power*, but also *wisdom* and *goodness*, as essential to the Maker of the world, though scrupling by their reasonings on his goodness, they were not thankful, so held the truth in unrighteousness. And as the Creator could not be beheld in his works without

out sovereignty, we see Nebuchadnezzar having a very lively sense of this when recovered from his brutality, and brought to think, as a man, of the divine providence about him, Dan. iv. 25. Eternal and sovereign power, wisdom, and goodness, is the eternal power and Godhead, which is manifest in all men, and shewed to them by the things that are made. And this was the only Trinity spoke of among the Gentiles: for they turned these divine attributes into persons, and spake so of divine goodness, wisdom, and power, that the fathers imagined them to be speaking of the Christian Trinity, which is only to be seen in Christ: for thus they understood Plato speaking of the *Logos* and his Father, and the soul of the world. If Hutchinson had taken this Trinity, he might have found full as much ground for it in the scripture, applying his fire, light, and air to it, as for his Trinity appearing to him in the motion of the heavens, which he imagines, and much more ground of evidence for its being known among the Heathen.

As to the scripture, 1. With respect to goodness, it tells us, God is love, manifested in giving his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. And the emblem of this divine love is fire. *Love strong as death, jealousy cruel as the grave, the coals thereof coals of fire, the flame of Jah.* 2. Wisdom is a scriptural name of the Son of his love, called also the *Logos*, which the fathers thought the same with Plato's *Logos*; and light is the scriptural emblem of him. 3. Power. The scripture calls the Holy Ghost the power of the Highest; and his emblem is the force of the action of air. And he is named *Ruach* and *Pneuma*, even as air, breath, or wind is. And as to any thing like a Trinity known among the Heathen, besides the sovereign goodness, and wisdom, and power eternal, understood by the things made as they appeared to every man, which they imagined as three persons, there is no such thing to be heard of from among them.

After it has been so long doubted, if there be such a thing as one of mankind incapable of the sense of a Deity, and the dread of his judgment, are you ready to hearken to them that would persuade you, all mankind are really such, but they alone who have the sense to perceive and acknowledge Hutchinson's — whirligig? — *I am, &c.*

P. S.

P. S. I thought you very far gone in the Hutchinsonian way, when I found you adhering to it, even on that side from which the late Lord President Forbes declined; who was the only man that could make Hutchinson intelligible by our common capacities, and whom Hutchinson owned as his friend, though differing from him about the light of nature and conscience. In this difference the President had the experience of all mankind on his side; as is now acknowledged even by the Atheistical philosophers of this day, as you may see by some of their late essays and dissertations. They have left the old Atheistical cant about the prejudices of education, still insisted on by Hutchinsonians. For after they have divested themselves of all those prejudices, they find by the history of mankind, and by experience, that the dread of an invisible power, from a consciousness of inward disorder, is deep laid in human nature. As to speculation, aside from experience, I think I mind of some common place in our school-divinity, against the Socinians denying the light of nature in the consciences of men. And what is said against innate ideas by Locke, who believed the Hottentots had no sense of a Deity, and was reckoned a Socinian, might be pled in behalf of the Socinians on that question, even as some of your Hutchinsonian writers now plead it. I have also heard some Quakers talking to this purpose, That man by the fall utterly lost all knowledge of God, who was pleased to recover him by inspiring mankind with his Spirit, or light within, the true light that lighteth every man coming into the world, even that same light that convinces men of sin. But this is only a round-about way of setting forth the undeniable fact, even the experience all mankind have of the light of nature and conscience, while, from its existence, they would infer the sufficiency of it to more than making sinners inexcusable. And the Hutchinsonian writer you have been reading, seeing the force of this inference, makes himself ridiculous, as they are, by his denying the existence of nature's light; why? — because their wild consequence from it is to him undeniable.

I have of late often wondered how it came, that some followers of Hutchinson were ready to allow that he might be wrong in more points than one; and yet were so zealously adhering to this that President Forbes could not hold, as if it were a most fundamental point. For though you think it not material, it appears now a most material point to

them. But my wonder ceased, when I considered, that nothing can serve more effectually to evade the force and blunt the edge of the conviction of sin, which we labour by any means to avoid. And so, whatever they let go, this must be held fast as their shield till they can find a better. This therefore is most material to them. And it must also be material to all who regard the gospel, and the truth as it is in Jesus; because it would shut the only door by which that truth can enter the heart of man. How vain is the pretence to support revelation by overthrowing conscience and the light of nature!

You tell me, you thought you understood nature and conscience in some of the lights wherein they were set by Hutchinsonians, better than you did some other ways of speaking on these points that you had heard. I know not what ways of speaking you have heard, and did not understand concerning nature and conscience: but what has been long ago learned from Paul's words on that matter (Rom. i. 19. 20. 21. 23. 32. and ii. 14. 15.), and which you have often heard, appears to me abundantly plain and agreeable to experience. Now, I cannot conceive what light nature and conscience could be set in to your understanding by those who deny them altogether, and so set them quite out of all lights. But if you mean the lights they set Paul's words in, which you understood better than by the light others set them in; then I must think you understand well that Paul says, The eternal power and Godhead of the Creator could not be seen from the creation! And you likewise understand, that Paul's Gentiles, who, not having the law, were a law to themselves, were only the Christian Gentiles! If this be the case, I see not how I can offer any scripture to your understanding, as finding you incapable to view it in any light wherein I am capable to set it. For if you cannot take it, speaking your own experience, how shall you take it speaking of supernatural things?

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